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THE BOOKS OF
HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

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THE BOOKS OF
HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

With Notes and Introduction

by

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

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suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

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*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE TIMES OF HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH.

1. IT was at a critical period of the history both of the Jewish nation and of the world at large, that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah lived and prophesied. By the taking of Babylon by Cyrus king of Persia, and the consequent development of the Persian Empire, a new era in the secular history of the world was inaugurated. With that event, as Dean Stanley has pointed out[1], we pass from the shadowy region of "primæval history," as he has called it, to the middle period of authentic "classical history," which intervenes between those earliest times and the "modern history" of the world. But with the taking of Babylon by Cyrus Jewish history also entered upon a new epoch. The overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, with which the previous, and as it might well have seemed the final stage of that history had closed, preceded only by a few years the capture of Babylon. The Jewish exiles were still in Babylon when Cyrus entered it[2]. It was his conquest of it, which was the immediate cause of their return to their own country and of the rebuilding of their city and temple. These last events were fraught with far weightier consequences to the world at large, than the taking of Babylon, or than any transition or advance, however great, in its merely secular history could produce. They led the way to the fulfilment of the promise in which the hope of the human race was bound up. They were a necessary step to the coming of Christ and to the introduction of Christianity, with the inestimable benefits which it has conferred

[1] *Jewish Church*, vol. III. p. 46. [2] Daniel v.

upon mankind. If Jerusalem had not been rebuilt and the apparently defunct national existence of its people revived, as by a resurrection from the dead[1], then, humanly speaking, Christ could not have been born and died. The history of the world, the rise and fall of vast empires and mighty dynasties, waits upon and subserves the history of the sons of Abraham, because in the purpose of God, in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

To this critical and important period the two prophets with whom we are now concerned undoubtedly belong. The Book of Ezra, which contains the history of the return from Babylon, and of the events which followed immediately upon it, mentions them both by name, and describes the effect upon the people of their prophecies, of which the written records are preserved to us in these Books[2].

2. Scarcely had Cyrus added the Babylonian Empire to his dominions, and so gained for himself authority alike over the Jewish exiles in Babylon and over Palestine their country, when he issued an edict for their return. This to the Jews was no unexpected event. Not only had their captivity and the length of its duration been foretold by the voice of prophecy, but Cyrus had been spoken of by name as their deliverer[3]. The remarkable circumstances which have been commonly supposed to have attended his capture of Babylon—"the stratagems by which the water was diverted, first in the Gyndes, and then in the Euphrates," "the hundred gates all of bronze along the vast circuit of the walls, the folding doors, the two-leaved gates, which so carefully guarded the approaches of the Euphrates, opened as by magic for the conquerors[4];" "must, it would seem, have belonged, not to the reign of Cyrus, but to that of Darius Hystaspes....We have the express testimony of Cyrus himself that the city opened its gates to his general 'without fighting or battle'[5]." But the capture itself and the safe conduct

[1] Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14.
[2] Ezra v. 1, 2; vi. 14.
[3] Jeremiah xxv. 9—13; xxix. 10—14; Isaiah xliv. 28.
[4] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. III. p. 58.
[5] Prof. Sayce, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, p. 16.

of the returning exiles through the vast desert that lay between Chaldea and Palestine, as by a causeway thrown up for a royal progress or the advance of a victorious army, had been announced beforehand[1]. And now the event itself was to fulfil these prophecies and satisfy the expectations based upon them. The time to favour Zion was come, and He in whose hand is the king's heart to turn it whithersoever He will, as the streams of water are guided by the cultivator into the channels which he has prepared for the irrigation of his land[2], "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to perform His will.

3. The edict by which Cyrus invited the captives to return, and which he both proclaimed by heralds throughout all his kingdom and published as a written document, is preserved at the close of the second Book of Chronicles, and repeated in a fuller form in the opening verses of the Book of Ezra.

"Jehovah, the God of heaven," so it ran, "hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem[3]."

By what channel this "charge" reached Cyrus we are not now concerned to enquire. It may have been, that his attention had been directed by Daniel to the prophecy of Isaiah, which pointed him out by name as the restorer of Israel. It has been thought that the monotheism of his own Persian religion would dispose him to regard with favour and sympathy a people, whose pure monotheistic creed was in this respect so nearly akin to his own. But our present knowledge derived from the recently discovered tablet and cylinder inscriptions, renders this view no longer tenable. It appears now to be

[1] Isaiah xliv. 28; xl. 3, 4. [2] Proverbs xxi. 1.

[3] Ezra i. 2—4. See also 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23, and 1 Esdras ii. 1—7.

certain that Cyrus was, on his own testimony, an Elamite rather than a Persian, and as we should therefore expect, a polytheist. His conduct towards the Jews was in accordance with the general policy, the reverse of that of his Babylonian and Assyrian predecessors, which he appears to have adopted towards conquered nations. Instead of removing them from their own lands, and supplying their places by alien peoples (as had been done in the case of the Ten Tribes by the kings of Assyria), and thus creating centres of sedition and disaffection throughout his dominions, he sought to secure their good will and allegiance, by restoring them to their respective countries and to the free practice of their several religions. With heathen nations he sent back the images of their gods. To the Jews, who had learned by the severe discipline of their captivity to abhor idols, he restored their sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of Merodach his god, and contributed to the rebuilding of their Temple and the worship of "Jehovah, the God of heaven[1]."

4. The response on the part of the Jews in Babylon to the invitation thus addressed to them, was far less general than has sometimes been supposed. The earnest supplication of Daniel for the holy mountain of his God[2], the mournful plaint of the Psalmist, as he sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept when he remembered Zion[3], have not unnaturally perhaps been taken to represent the spirit and feeling of the people at large, during the seventy years captivity. Yet the facts of the return clearly shew, that it was only in "the remnant" that the pure spirit of religion and patriotism was in reality maintained. "The most part appear, as now, to have been taken up with their material prosperity, and at best, to have become inured to the cessation of their symbolical worship, connected as it was with the declaration of the forgiveness of their sins..... Those who thought more of temporal prosperity than of their high spiritual nobility and destination, had flourished doubtless in that exile, as they have in their present homelessness, as wan-

[1] Ezra i. 7—11. [2] Daniel ix. 20. [3] Psalm cxxxvii.

derers among the nations. Haman calculated apparently on being able to pay out of their spoils ten thousand talents of silver, some £300,000,000, two-thirds of the annual revenue of the Persian Empire, into the king's treasuries[1]." Those who returned are described as "the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirit God had raised (or stirred up)[2]." But the expression, "the priests and the Levites," is evidently used quite generally, and must not be understood to imply that the whole, or even the greater part of those ecclesiastical orders went back. Though the proportion of priests in the caravan was large, yet of the twenty-four sacerdotal courses only four are stated to have returned. Of the Levites there were only seventy-four individuals together with 128 singers of the family of Asaph and 139 gate-keepers. Their helpers, given to them for the menial work of the Sanctuary, the Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants, numbered 392. The whole company that returned with Zerubbabel consisted of 42,360 free men, or some 200,000 free persons (men, women and children), together with 7,337 male and female slaves, of whom 200 were "singing men and women[3]."

5. But small as was the returning band when compared with the whole number of captives, a mere "remnant," as their prophets had foretold, in comparison of the nation in its palmy days, when Israel and Judah were as the sand upon the sea shore for multitude, the spirit by which they were animated appears to have been that of high devotion to their country, their religion and their God. The joyousness of their return has been thus strikingly depicted:

"And when the day at last arrived which was to see their expectations fulfilled, the burst of joy was such as has no parallel in the sacred volume: it is indeed the Revival, the Second Birth, the Second Exodus of the nation. There was now 'a new

[1] Pusey, *Commentary on Haggai*, Introd. p. 484.
[2] Ezra i. 5.
[3] Ezra ii. See also Pusey, *Commentary on Haggai*, Introd. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. III. pp. 84—86.

song,' of which the burden was that the Eternal again reigned over the earth, and that the gigantic idolatries which surrounded them had received a deadly shock: that the waters of oppression had rolled back, in which they had been struggling like drowning men; that the snare was broken, in which they had been entangled like a caged bird. It was like a dream, too good to be true. The gaiety, the laughter of their poetry, resounded far and wide. The surrounding nations could not but confess what great things had been done for them. It was like the sudden rush of the waters into the dry torrent-beds of the south of Palestine, or of the yet extremer south, of which they may have heard, in far Ethiopia. It was like the reaper bearing on his shoulder the golden sheaves in summer which he had sown amongst the tears of winter. So full were their hearts, that all nature was called to join in their thankfulness. The vast rivers of their new Mesopotamian home, and the waves of the Indian Ocean, are to take part in the chorus, and clap their foaming crests like living hands. The mountains of their own native land are invited to express their joy: each tree in the forests that clothed the hills, or that cast their shade over the field, is to have a tongue for the occasion[1]."

That this high ideal was realised by the whole returning company we need not suppose. That tears of penitence and words of prayer mingled with their strains of joy we must not forget. "They shall come with weeping," with tears of chastened if of grateful joy, "and with supplications will I lead them," God had said by the prophet Jeremiah[2]. So again the same prophet pictures their return: "In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward[3]." But the jubilant return was still the ideal with which the Spirit of God in Prophet and in Psalmist had furnished them; and if it awaited its full realisation in a yet brighter and more distant future, it was the ideal to which some,

[1] Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. III. pp. 78, 79.
[2] xxxi. 9. [3] l. 4, 5.

we may well believe, of those "whose spirit God had raised," even then in measure attained, and to which as a body they aspired. The joy of the Lord was their strength. In that strength they faced and overcame the difficulties and dangers of the intervening desert, "a hard, gravel plain, from the moment they left the banks of the Euphrates till they reached the northern extremity of Syria; with no solace except the occasional wells and walled stations; or, if their passage was in the spring, the natural herbage and flowers which clothed the arid soil. Ferocious hordes of Bedouin robbers then, as now, swept the whole tract." A journey of nearly four months, though now it is usually accomplished in about two, would bring them to their destination, "the small central strip of the country round Jerusalem, occupied by the tribes of Judah and Benjamin," to which the larger part of the exiles belonged[1].

6. True to the object for which they had been invited to return, the restored exiles set themselves at once to rebuild the temple and re-establish the worship of Jehovah. For this Cyrus supplied the means and furnished ample directions[2]. For this some of the chief of the Fathers on their arrival at Jerusalem offered freely[3]. Their first step was to re-construct the altar on its ancient foundation[4], that so sacrifice, the great central rite of their religion, the necessary condition of access to the Holy One, might immediately be resumed. The altar was completed and dedicated, on the first day of the seventh month of the same year in which they left Babylon. On the fifteenth day of that month the feast of Tabernacles was duly kept, and "the people," we read, "gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem[5]." Henceforward the daily sacrifice and the stated festivals according to the law of Moses were observed. Negotiations were entered into without delay with the Tyrians and Sidonians, for the supply of timber for building

[1] Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. III. pp. 87, 88, 91.
[2] Ezra vi. 1—4. [3] Ezra ii. 68, 69.
[4] This would seem to be the meaning of the expression, "upon his bases," Ezra iii. 3; "upon his own place," 1 Esdras v. 50.
[5] Ezra iii. 1—4.

the Temple. The work actually commenced, and the foundation of the Temple was laid with great rejoicing, mingled however with the lamentations of those who had witnessed the greater glory of the former Temple, in the second month of the following year. Thus far all had progressed favourably. The spirit of the people rose superior to all obstacles and hindrances, and the great work which they had in view bid fair to arrive at a speedy and prosperous issue.

7. But a serious check was now encountered, and a delay of some fifteen years consequently intervened. The Samaritans, their neighbours in Northern Palestine, had requested to be allowed to take part in the rebuilding of the Temple, on the plea, "we seek your God, as ye do." But the plea was ignored and the request peremptorily and indignantly refused. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God," was the uncompromising reply[1]. Offended at the refusal the Samaritans made representations at the Persian court, with a view to stop the work in which they were counted unworthy to co-operate. During the reigns of Cambyses (the Ahasuerus of the book of Ezra), who ascended the Persian throne on the death of Cyrus, and of the usurper Smerdis (the Artaxerxes of the same book), by whom he was succeeded, the representations of the enemies of the Jews prevailed, and the building of the Temple was absolutely prohibited. It was not till Darius, the son of Hystaspes, on the overthrow of Smerdis, was placed upon the throne, that the policy of Cyrus was resumed, and favour was again extended to the community at Jerusalem.

8. It is at this juncture that the prophets Haggai and Zechariah appear upon the scene. With them, as we learn from the book of Ezra, the resumption of the Temple works originated. The spirit of the people had been broken by obstacles which appeared insuperable. Their zeal for the House of the Lord had grown cold through the long delay. They had come to acquiesce in what they deemed inevitable. They looked on the unfinished work, on the bare foundations, and said, "the time is not come, the time that the Lord's House should be built."

[1] Ezra iv. 2, 3.

They turned aside to selfish objects and secular pursuits. On their own houses they bestowed labour. Them they decorated with the wainscot of cedar which had once been deemed the peculiar ornament of the Sanctuary[1]. To rouse them from this state of lethargy and to prepare them to rise to the new opportunity, which the changed policy of the Persian government was about to offer them, the prophetic call came. In the name of the God of Israel which was upon them, it summoned them to arise and work. The first to respond to it were the rulers civil and ecclesiastical, Zerubbabel the Prince or Governor, and Joshua the High Priest. Whether they too had come to share in any measure the general apathy, or whether, unable any longer to communicate their own zeal to their countrymen, they had perforce been idle, we do not know. At any rate they now placed themselves at the head of the movement to resume the work. A further hindrance was threatened by the interference of the Satrap of Syria and other Persian officials, to whose immediate authority the Jews were subject. But Darius, to whom the matter was referred, not only forbade any obstacle to be offered, but by a royal decree charged the revenues of the province with the cost of rebuilding the temple and providing sacrifices. Thus encouraged the Jews set themselves heartily to the work, the prophets of God helping and inciting them still throughout. They "builded and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the Prophet and of Zechariah the son of Iddo[2]." In four years time, in the sixth year of Darius, the Temple was completed.

[1] Haggai i. 2, 4.

[2] Ezra vi. 14. See also 1 Esdras vi. 1, 2, vii. 3, where Haggai is called Aggeus.

CHAPTER II.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

The following table represents approximately the chronological position of Haggai and Zechariah, and of their prophecies, with reference to Jewish history, and to one another.

About
B. C. 536. The proclamation of Cyrus for the return of the captives.
" " 7th month (October). The altar built. Sacrifice resumed. The feast of Tabernacles kept.
" 535. 2nd month. Foundation of the Temple laid.
" 535—520. Rebuilding of the Temple stopped through the intrigues of the Samaritans.
" 520. The work resumed through the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah and the subsequent decree of Darius.
" " (September) Haggai's first prophecy, ch. i. 1—11.
" " (October) Haggai's second prophecy, ch. ii. 1 - 9.
" " (November) Zechariah's first prophecy, ch. i. 1—6.
" " (December) Haggai's third and fourth prophecies, ch. ii. 10—19; 20—23.
" 519. (January) Zechariah's second prophecy, ch. i. 7—vi. 15.
" 518. (November) Zechariah's third prophecy, ch. vii. 1—viii. 23.
" 515. (March) The Temple completed.

The remaining prophecies in the book of Zechariah (ch. ix.—xiv.) have no date given them by their author. Their date and authorship are discussed in the chapter on the Unity of the Book, Introd. to Zechariah, ch. II.

The identification of the Jewish months with our own is of course only approximate.

The Jewish year was a solar year and its months coincided with the seasons. It ordinarily consisted of 12 months, but an intercalary month appears to have been introduced from time to time, in order to bring the month Abib into coincidence with the barley harvest. "Variations must inevitably exist between (our) lunar and the (Jewish) solar month, each of the former ranging over portions of two of the latter." The general identification given above is sufficiently near. See *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Month, where the whole subject is fully discussed.

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPHET HAGGAI.

HAGGAI was the first of the three prophets, who belong to that final stage of Jewish history which began with the return from the captivity in Babylon. Two of them, he and Zechariah, prophesied at its commencement. Malachi followed about a hundred years later. After that, the voice of prophecy was silent for four centuries till the days of John the Baptist.

Of the personal history of Haggai scarcely anything is known. His name has been thought by some to mean "festive," and to be indicative of the joyous character of the predictions which he delivered; but the derivation and reference are alike uncertain. His tribe and parentage are not told us. It would seem most probable that he was among the captives who returned from Babylon, and there is a tradition that he was born during the exile in that city. It has been held indeed by some that he was one of that small band of survivors, who having been originally carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, lived to revisit their native country. The only ground, however, for this conjecture is the reference to the Temple "in her first glory" in ch. ii. 3, of his prophecy, a reference which does not seem in itself sufficient to support the conjecture. Tradition has also made him one of the men (Zechariah and Malachi being the others), who were with Daniel when he saw his vision, "by the side of the great river which is Hiddekel[1], and a member, after his return to Jerusalem, of the Great Synagogue.

In addition to the prophecy which bears his name, that section of the book of Ezra which extends from ch. iii. 2 to vi. 22 (with the exception of ch. iv. 6—23, and of the mention of

[1] Daniel x. 7.

Artaxerxes ch. vi. 14, which were added afterwards by Ezra, as the compiler of the book) has been ascribed to Haggai as its author. The minuteness of detail and the graphic description which characterise that section are thought to "bespeak an actor in the scene described," and the supposition that Haggai was that actor is held to be confirmed, by many coincidences in style and diction between that portion of the book of Ezra, and the prophetical book of which Haggai is the acknowledged author. For a full discussion of this question the reader is referred to the article in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* on the book of Ezra, by the present Bishop of Bath and Wells.

In some of the old versions (the LXX., the Vulgate, and the Peshito-Syriac) the names of Haggai and Zechariah are connected with certain Psalms. In some cases the connection is not improbable, in so far as the Psalms in question are generally allowed to be of the date of the return from Babylon. The title for example of each of the four Psalms cxlv.—cxlviii. is in the LXX., "Alleluia of Haggai and Zechariah." But though the link of connection is interesting, and may possibly indicate some special use or adaptation of these Psalms by the two prophets, there is no sufficient ground for ascribing the authorship of them either to Haggai or to Zechariah. A curious account of these titles is given by one ancient writer, who says that Haggai was the first to sing Hallelujah in the restored Temple, and adds, "therefore we say, Alleluia, which is the hymn of Haggai and Zechariah[1]."

The style of Haggai has often been described as tame and prosaic. The mantle of prophecy had fallen upon him, it is said, from the earlier prophets, but it had fallen upon him in "shreds and tatters." It is no doubt true that the style of Haggai differs widely from that of Isaiah, for example, in his grand flights of impassioned eloquence, of fervid poetry and prophetic inspiration. But when the object of his mission is kept in view, the simplicity and severity of his style, so far from affording any reasonable ground of objection, is a proof

[1] Pseudo-Epiphanius, *de vitis Proph.* See *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Haggai, and Rev. C. H. H. Wright on Zechariah, Introd. p. xx.

of the wisdom of Almighty God, who adapts His means to the ends which He contemplates, and chooses and equips His workmen for the work to which He calls them. There is no need to suppose, as some have done, that the record of Haggai's prophecies as we now possess it is fragmentary and incomplete; that we have notes and outlines rather than a full report of what he said. He may indeed, during the period of his ministry, have uttered other prophecies and exhortations which are not preserved to us. But we should be loth to think, that they differed materially from those now extant in style or subject matter. What we have is a true and sufficient sample of the whole, even if it be not itself the whole. These brief sharp sentences of his were exactly what the occasion required, better adapted than aught else would have been to the purpose which he had before him. It should ever be remembered that the Jewish prophets had a twofold function to perform. They were preachers of righteousness as well as predicters of future events. To reform, to correct, to restore, was no small part of their vocation and ministry. They had to make ready a people for the Lord, as well as to awaken and keep alive the expectation of His coming. These two branches of their work were in perfect keeping and harmony with each other. They were but different parts of one great whole, different forces in the one great onward movement which characterised the Old Testament dispensation. If the promise to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, was to be fulfilled, then the seed of Abraham must not be allowed to fall utterly away from God. By correction and chastisement, by stern rebuke and severe invective, they must be moved from time to time to repentance and amendment. If correction and rebuke were to be effectual, they must be accompanied by the incentive of hope, and by the renewal of the promise to the fathers. The preaching of the Baptist, only intensified by the greater nearness of the Kingdom, was in substance the preaching of all the prophets who had preceded him: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." But in the prosecution of His plan, Almighty God was pleased to commit the two parts of this preaching to His Messengers in varying measure and degree. To Haggai the

former and severer part was specially committed. On the latter and brighter topic he was far from silent. But it was the stern call, "Repent ye," with which he was principally charged. And with that his subject matter it is no wonder that his style accords. "There is a ponderous and simple dignity in the emphatic reiteration addressed alike to every class of the community, prince, priest and people: *Be strong, be strong, be strong*[1]. 'Cleave, stick fast, to the work you have to do.' Or again, *Consider your ways, consider, consider, consider*[2]. It is the Hebrew phrase for the endeavour, characteristic of the gifted seers of all times, to compel their hearers to turn the inside of their hearts outwards to their own view, to take the masks from off their consciences, to 'see life steadily, and to see it whole'[3]."

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF HAGGAI.

I. The First Prophecy and its effects. Ch. I.

The Introduction. The date, author and recipients of the prophecy (ver. 1).

The prophecy or inspired address, ver. 2—11. The excuse of the Jews for their delay in rebuilding the Temple, that the time for it had not come (ver. 2), is met by the pointed rebuke that they found no such reason for delay in building costly and luxurious houses for themselves (ver. 3, 4).

They are called upon in the name of Jehovah seriously to lay to heart the blight and disaster that rested on all their undertakings (ver. 5, 6); and having traced it by consideration to its cause (ver. 7), to procure its removal by resuming the building of the Temple (ver. 8); for it was the neglect of this that had brought the divine displeasure in famine and drought upon them (ver. 9—11).

[1] Haggai ii. 4. [2] Haggai i. 5, 7; ii. 15, 18.
[3] Stanley, *Jewish Church*, III. 101. See also Dr Pusey on *Haggai*, Introd.

The effects of the prophecy, ver. 12—15.

Moved with godly fear, Zerubbabel and Joshua and the people who had been addressed through them promptly obey the call (ver. 12). Encouraged in their obedience by an assurance of the divine presence and favour in their undertaking (ver. 13), and animated by the quickening influences of the divine Spirit within them, they flock with alacrity to the work (ver. 14), and within a month from the first utterance of the prophecy the rebuilding of the Temple is being vigorously prosecuted (ver. 15).

II. The Second Prophecy. Ch. II. 1—9.

After a month, which had been spent by the Jews in active exertions for the restoration of the Temple (ver. 1), a second prophecy is addressed through Haggai to Zerubbabel and to Joshua and to the people at large (ver. 2).

Anticipating the depressing effects of a comparison of the new Temple with the old on the minds of those who had seen them both, and through them on the community at large (ver. 3), Almighty God urges them to carry on the work with unabated ardour, on the ground that He is with them (ver. 4), in fulfilment of the covenant which He had made with their fathers (ver. 5).

And the rather to encourage them, He foretells a shaking of the heavens and earth, a great convulsion of the kingdoms of the world (ver. 6), which shall result in glory to the Temple which they now are building, greater than any which ever belonged to that earlier Temple, whose lost splendour they deplore (ver. 7—9).

III. The Third Prophecy. Ch. II. 10—19.

Two months and three days have elapsed since the last prophecy, or inspired address, when Haggai speaks again to the people in the word of the Lord (ver. 10).

By reference to the priests, as the authorised expositors of the Law (ver. 11), he elicits the decision that, whereas ceremonial sanctity is conveyed by the hallowed flesh of the sacrifice only to that with which it comes into first and immediate contact, and does not extend beyond that limit (ver. 12), ceremonial defilement by contact with a corpse has a wider range, and is propagated over a wider sphere (ver. 13).

The moral principle which underlies the ceremonial provision applies in its full force to the returned captives. It is the gauge of their conduct, and the explanation of God's dealings with them. Their one

sin in neglecting the Temple spreads its moral pollution over "every work of their hands," and even over the sacrifices which they offer on that altar, which they vainly hope will consecrate themselves and all their doings (ver. 14).

Once again the prophet urges them to consider, to fix their attention on, the period between the day on which the foundation of the Temple was completed and the day on which he now is speaking to them. That period of supineness and neglect in the work of God's House had been marked throughout by dearth and blight and disappointment. With the day of renewed effort and rekindled zeal, in which this prophecy is uttered, a new era of prosperity shall commence: *from this day will I bless you.* ver. 15—19.

IV. The Fourth Prophecy. Ch. II. 20—23.

A second time on the same day the prophet is moved to speak in the word of the Lord (ver. 20).

To Zerubbabel in his official and typical character as "Governor of Judah," the message is addressed. The prediction of the second prophecy, "I will shake the heavens and the earth," is repeated and enlarged (ver. 21, 22).

But amidst the universal commotion and overthrow, Zerubbabel shall be honoured and preserved as the object of Jehovah's choice (ver. 23).

HAGGAI.

IN the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, 1
in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD
by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel,

CH. I. 1—11. THE FIRST PROPHECY.

1. *Darius the king*] Lit., **Daryavesh.** "*Daryavesh* is a more accurate transcript of the name of the Persian kings than Δαρεῖος (Darius). Darius calls himself in his descriptions *Dâryavush*, which means the 'holder,' or 'supporter.'" Max. Müller in Pusey's *Book of Daniel*, p. 570.

This was Darius the son of Hystaspes, who had deposed the impostor Smerdis and succeeded him on the throne of Persia, and who on his accession returned to the policy of Cyrus with reference to the Jews.

the sixth month] i.e., of the Jewish year. While they had kings of their own the Jewish historians were wont, as we see throughout the Books of Kings and Chronicles, to date events by the years of their reigns. Now that their own monarchy was at an end, they use instead the year of the foreign Sovereign to whom they were tributary. The transition is observable in ver. 8 of 2 Kings xxv. as compared with ver. 1. But the months are still those of their own calendar. The sixth month was called Elul after the return from Babylon. (Neh. vi. 15; 1 Macc. xiv. 27.)

by Haggai] Lit., **by the hand of,** i.e. by his means or instrumentality. And so in ver. 3.

Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel] Both in the history of the return in Ezra (iii. 2, 8, v. 2) and Nehemiah (xii. 1) and in the genealogies of our Lord, Matt. i. 12; Luke iii. 27, Zerubbabel is called as he is in this book the son of Shealtiel or Salathiel. But in 1 Chron. iii. 19 he is said to be the son of Pedaiah. The probable explanation of the discrepancy is that Shealtiel, who was the elder brother and the head of the family, had no sons of his own, and that consequently his nephew Zerubbabel, who was the eldest son of the younger brother Pedaiah, became the heir of his uncle Shealtiel, and was commonly regarded and described as his son. He was the recognised head of the Jews in Babylon, "the Prince of Judah," as he is called (Ezra i. 8), at the time when the decree of Cyrus was issued for their return. He bears a

governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech the

leading part in the history of the return, and of the events which followed immediately upon it. He was among the first to respond to the prophetic call of Haggai and Zechariah (Hag. i. 12). Many of their prophecies were addressed to him by name (Hag. i. 1, ii. 2, 21; Zech. iv. 6); and his spirit was specially stirred up by God (Hag i. 14) to promote the reformation of the people and the rebuilding of the temple. He has been described as "a man inferior to few of the great characters of Scripture, whether we consider the perilous undertaking to which he devoted himself, the importance, in the economy of the Divine government, of his work, his courageous faith, or the singular distinction of being the object of so many and such remarkable prophetic utterances." Smith's *Bible Dict.* Art. *Zerubbabel.* The fact that his name Zerubbabel ("scattered to Babylon," or "born at Babylon," *Gesenius*) was changed, like those of Daniel and his companions, to the Chaldee name Sheshbazzar, as well as his appointment by Cyrus to the office of "Governor," makes it probable, as has been suggested, that he was in the service of the king of Babylon. In the Apocryphal account of the return from Babylon contained in the first book of Esdras, Zerubbabel who is apparently regarded by the writer as a distinct person from Sheshbazzar (Sanabassar, 1 Esdr. ii. 12), under whom the Jews returned in the time of Cyrus, is described as one of the young men who formed the body guard of king Darius. The story told is, that three of these young men agreed to compete before the king as to which of them could compose and write the wisest sentence. "The first wrote, Wine is the strongest. The second wrote, The king is strongest. The third wrote, Women are strongest: but above all things Truth beareth away the victory" (1 Esdr. iii. 10—12). To this third sentence which was Zerubbabel's, the king and his wise men awarded the palm, and its author, on being invited by the king to name his reward, claimed the fulfilment of the vow which Darius had made on his accession, to build Jerusalem and restore the holy vessels for the Temple. (See the story in full 1 Esdr. ch. iii., iv.; and for the additions and variations of Josephus *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. *Zerubbabel.*)

governor] The foreign name (*Pechah*) here used for the "Governor" of the Jews is again a badge of their servitude. The word itself is an interesting one. It is first used in the Hebrew Bible in the time of Solomon (1 Kings x. 15; 2 Chron. ix. 14) of some "governors of the country" in his outlying dominions who sent him a yearly supply of gold. Even there it is probably a foreign title. "It seems to me most probable," writes Dr Pusey, "that Solomon adopted the title, as it already existed in the Syrian territories, for it is not said that he 'placed *Pechahs*,' but only that they paid him gold. Thus the name 'Rajah' is continued in our Indian dominions." We next find it when Benhadad after his first defeat is advised to depose the thirty-two subordinate kings who helped him, and to put *Pechahs*, Syrian Governors, in their place (1 Kings xx. 24). "Then, still in that neighbourhood, and in part doubtless in the same country, they are in military command in Sennacherib's army, leading doubtless their own contingent of troops,

high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, 2
This people say, The time is not come, the time that the
LORD's house should be built. Then came the word of the 3
LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

in his multitudinous host (2 Kings xviii. 24). Sennacherib compares Hezekiah to one of the 'Governors' of the subjugated provinces, which he held subdued (Comp. Is. x. 8, 9; 2 Kings xviii. 34). Then, in each case joined with *Sagans*, *Pechah* is used of Babylonian, (Jer. li. 23, 57; Ezek. xxiii. 6, 23) and Median (Jer. li. 28) governors. Daniel, in recounting the Babylonian governors, places the *Pechahs* the third, after the *Satraps* and *Sagans* (iii. 2, 3, 27). Under Darius, they are not immediately united with the Sagans, but still are enumerated with these only, the *Satraps* and the *haddaberin*, 'privy Councillors,' vi. 8. Somewhat later, (Esth. viii. 9, ix. 3) the *Pechahs* are mentioned without the *Sagans*, but with the *Satraps* and the 'princes of the provinces.' In the times after the captivity there were several such *Pechahs*, westward of the Euphrates, between it and Judea (Ezra viii. 36; Neh. ii. 7, 9), probably the same locality, in regard to which the name was first used under Solomon. Specifically, Tatnai is entitled as '*Pechah* beyond the river,' Ezra v. 3, vi. 6, who (although apparently he dwelt at Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 7) is yet, in the same rescript of Darius, distinguished from 'the *Pechah* of the Jews' (Ezra vi. 7), whom naturally there was most occasion to mention (Hag. i. 1, 14, ii. 2, 21; Mal. i. 8; Neh. v. 14, 18, xii. 26)." Pusey, *Book of Daniel*, p. 567; where also the possible connection of *Pechah* with *Pashah* is discussed by Max Müller.

2. *speaketh*] Lit. saith, the same word as throughout the verse.

this people] possibly used as a term of reproach: comp. ch. ii. 14; Is. viii. 11, 12.

the time is not come] Lit., **not time to come.** The sentence is evidently elliptical, and there is much difference of opinion as to what should be supplied. The simplest way of taking it appears to be, "it is not (yet) the time (for it, i.e. the matter in hand, or proposed undertaking) to come." Then what that matter or undertaking is, is explained in the next clause, "the time of the House of Jehovah, for it to be built." The LXX., however, and other Ancient Versions render, *The time is not come for the Lord's house to be built*. R. V. margin.

It has been thought by some, that in saying the time was not come the Jews meant to allege, that the seventy years of desolation which had been predicted were not yet fulfilled. But if that had really been the case their excuse would have been valid. "There was indeed," as Pusey observes, "a second fulfilment of seventy years, from the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 586, to its consecration in the sixth year of Darius, B.C. 516. But this was through the wilfulness of man prolonging the desolation decreed by God, and Jeremiah's prophecy relates to the people not to the temple." It is clear from the sharp rebuke here administered, and from the severe judgments with which their procrastination had been visited (ver. 6, 9—11), that the excuse was idle and the delay worldly and culpable.

4 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses,
And this house *lie* waste?
5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider
your ways.
6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little;

4. *for you, O ye*] Lit., **for you, you**: *you, yourselves*, R.V. The repetition of the pronoun is emphatic, "you are the people I mean;" or you in implied contrast to Almighty God, comp. 1 Sam xxv. 24, where Abigail, anxious to appease David's anger at the churlishness of Nabal, exclaims, "upon me, my Lord, I (am the person at fault), let this iniquity be."

your cieled houses] Lit. **your houses cieled**. i.e. *your houses (and they too) cieled*. The adjective thus added without an article has the force of a predicate and so becomes emphatic. With the article it would form part of the subject. Comp. Ps. cxliii. 10: "Let Thy Spirit good (as it is, and therefore ready to help and guide the sinful and infirm), lead me," &c. The translators in A.V., feeling the force of the adjective as a predicate, have broken the first part of the sentence into a separate proposition, "Thy Spirit is good, lead me," &c. The Prayer-Book version is, "Let thy loving Spirit lead me," &c.

cieled] Lit. **covered or boarded**. The word is used with reference to the roof of the Temple, which was high-pitched like our modern roofs, and cieled with boards within. "He *covered* the house with beams (rafters) and boards of cedar," 1 Kings vi. 9. It is also used of the cieling with boards of Solomon's house of the forest of Lebanon, 1 Kings vii. 3, and of some kind of covering or boarding (the passage is obscure) of his "Porch of Judgment," 1 Kings vii. 7. The practice was luxurious and magnificent even in a king (Jer. xxii. 14). Yet they who professed themselves unable to restore the House of the Lord were indulging in it in their own houses. They built costly houses for themselves, even using, it may be, to decorate them, the cedar wood which had been brought for the Temple (Ezra iii. 7; *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. Zerubbabel), and had grown indifferent to the ruin and desolation of the House of God.

5. *Consider*] Lit. **set your heart upon**, consider both their nature and (as what follows shews) their consequences; both what they are and to what they lead. The expression *consider*, set your heart, is used by Haggai no fewer than four times in this short book, i. 5, 7, ii. 15, 18.

6. *Ye have sown much*, &c.] The expostulation is very abrupt and forcible in the Hebrew, "Ye sowed much, but to bring in little! To eat, but not to satiety! To drink, but not to exhilaration! To clothe (oneself), but not for warmth, to him (the wearer)!" The description refers not to one year, but to many. It coincides with the whole period of their sloth and neglect in the matter of the Temple. It points to a double judgment, dearth and scarcity in the fruits of the ground, and (what often accompanies this, for the same adverse influences which

Ye eat, but ye have not enough;
Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink;
Ye clothe you, but there is none warm;
And he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.
Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 7
Go up *to* the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; 8
And I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.
Ye looked for much, and lo, *it came* to little; 9

blight the earth are injurious to the human frame) want of power in the body of man, to assimilate and benefit by food and drink and clothing.

he that earneth wages] The judgment is not confined to the fruits of the earth, but extends to all branches of human industry. Disappointment and loss mar all alike. "The labour pictured is not only fruitless, but wearisome and vexing. There is a seeming result of all the labour, something to allure hopes; but forthwith it is gone. The heathen assigned a like baffling of hope as one of the punishments of hell." Pusey.

8. *Go up to the mountain*] The consideration to which they have twice been called is to lead to action and amendment. They are not only to repent, but to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

the mountain] This is clearly not, as some have thought, the mountain on which the Temple stood, "the mountain of the Lord's house," but the mountain from which the timber for building was to be fetched. It might possibly mean Lebanon, from which they were to cause wood to be brought, *qui facit per alium facit per se*, but the words sound more like a call to immediate personal effort, and then the mountain would be the mountainous neighbourhood generally (*hill country*, R.V. margin), to which they were themselves to go and bring wood. See Neh. ii. 8, where "the king's forest" would seem to have been in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; and viii. 15, where possibly "the mount" means the Mount of Olives.

I will be glorified] "The meaning may be either, 'I will accept it as done for My glory'; or, 'I will display My glory in it' (see ch. ii. 9)." *Annotated Paragraph Bible*, Rel. Tract. Soc.

9—11. Having pointed out in ver. 8 the way of amendment and prosperity, the prophet resumes in these verses the expostulation of vv. 4—6, and again insists upon the depressed condition of the people and its cause.

9. *Ye looked for much*, &c.] Lit. **to look (there was looking) for much, and (it came) to little!** Emphatic as ver. 6, where see note. A double blight and curse had come upon them. They had looked for much, had expected a plentiful harvest, and perhaps the appearance of the crops had warranted the expectation. But when they came to

And when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it
Why? saith the LORD of hosts.
Because of mine house that *is* waste,
And ye run every man unto his own house.
10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew,
And the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.
11 And I called *for* a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains,

gather it in they found the actual yield but little, less even perhaps than they had originally sown. Pusey quotes *the seed of a homer shall yield an ephah*, i.e. one tenth of what was sown, Is. v. 10. And when this little was brought home into the garner, even that melted away by mildew or waste or loss. God did but blow upon it with the breath of His displeasure, and lo it was gone, as though instead of solid grain it had been chaff of the summer threshingfloor.

and ye run, &c.] *while ye run*, R.V., with eager zeal and interest to build and adorn it. See ver. 4. The word run is used in the same figurative way in Psalm cxix. 32; Prov. i. 16.

10. *the heaven over you*, &c.] Lit. **upon you are stayed the heavens.** Some understand by "upon" or "against" you, "on your account," on account of, or in punishment of your sins (*for your sake*, R.V. text). But there would be something of tautology in this, because the same thing has been said in the first word of the verse, "therefore" (on account of what has been mentioned in the preceding verses) has this judgment come upon you. It is better therefore to take it, as in A. V., and R. V. margin, "the heaven over you." Compare the terms in which the judgment had been threatened by Moses, "thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass," Deut. xxviii. 23.

from dew] not rain only, but even dew had been withholden. "Coeli non solum pluviam non dederunt, sed ne rorem quidem, quo arentes agri saltem humore modico temperarentur." Hieron. We must not forget how copious, and therefore how important to the husbandman, especially in the absence of rain, was the dew in Palestine. "In a latitude so high as ours, and which yet has a mean temperature higher than its degrees should give it, the chill of the night serves only to shed fog or mist upon the lower stratum of air; but in warmer climates—and in no country is it more so than in Syria—the vast burden of the watery element, which the fervour of day has raised aloft, becomes, quickly after sunset, a prodigious dew, breaking down upon the earth, as a mighty yet noiseless deluge." Isaac Taylor, *Spirit of Heb. Poetry*, c. IV. pp. 85, 86.

11. *a drought*] The Jewish commentators have observed a paronomasia or play on words, as between the fault and the punishment. My house is "*waste*" (*charēb*, ver. 4, 9), through your neglect, and your punishment shall be a "*drought*" (*choreb*). "Quasi dicat; quia aedem meam vastam relinquitis, ego quoque in omnia vestra vastitatem immittam." Rosenm.

And upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil,
And upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth,
And upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. 13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD.

labour] The word here used means properly wearisome labour, toil (Gen. xxxi. 42). It is κόπος rather than ἔργον. Here of course it means the product of labour.

CH. I. **12—15.** THE EFFECTS OF THE PROPHECY.

12. *the remnant of the people*] i.e. not the rest or remainder of the people beside Zerubbabel and Joshua, who had been mentioned by name, but "the remnant" in what came to be a technical use of the word, that part of the nation, a remnant only in comparison of the whole, which returned from the captivity in Babylon.

and the words] some would render *according to the words*, but the A.V. gives a satisfactory sense, and the construction is borne out by Jer. xxvi. 5, xxxv. 15.

did fear] The word is used in its usual O. T. sense to denote the spirit of true religion. There was genuine conversion on the part of the people, they yielded, not the unwilling obedience of terror, but the hearty service of godly fear.

13. *messenger*] The word is that commonly used for an *angel* in the O.T., but its first and proper meaning is messenger. In the same way in the N.T., the same word (ἄγγελος) is used generally in its restricted sense for an angel, and occasionally in its wider sense for a messenger (Luke vii. 27, ix. 52; James ii. 25). Haggai is the only prophet who uses this title of himself. It is, to say the least, doubtful whether Moses as a prophet is intended by it in Num. xx. 16. Malachi ("my angel or messenger") has it for the only name by which we know him, and he uses it of the Jewish priest (ii. 7), and of John Baptist the forerunner of our Lord, and of our Lord Himself, "the messenger of the Covenant" (iii. 1).

I am with you] Lit. **I with you.** This short but all-sufficient promise, varied sometimes by the corresponding expression of faith, "*God with us*," or by the record of its fulfilment. "*Jehovah was with him*," shines out like a bright star in times of darkness and need to individual saints, and to the Church at large in the O.T. It is given to Jacob at Bethel at the outset of his journey (Gen. xxviii. 15); to Moses at the

14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of
Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the
son of Josedech the high priest, and the spirit of all the
remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the
15 house of the LORD of hosts, their God, in the four and
twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of
Darius the king.

Bush, when called to be the deliverer of his people (Ex. iii. 12); to Joshua, when he took up for completion the unfinished work of Moses (Jos. i. 5); to Jeremiah at his entrance on the difficult work of prophesying (Jer. i. 8). It was fulfilled to Joseph when sold a slave into Egypt (Gen. xxxix. 2), and when made a prisoner there on a false accusation (ver. 21). It was the battle-cry of the Church when threatened with the invasion of the proud Assyrian (Is. viii. 10), and the refrain of her song of victory when the Assyrian was overthrown (Ps. xlvi. 7, 11). In the N. T. it finds its full accomplishment in Him who is "Emmanuel, God with us" (Matt. i. 23). Here Haggai sums up the promise of all needful resources for the work, and protection from the jealous foes who had so long hindered it, and conveys the assurance of a prosperous issue in the few short words, "I with you, saith Jehovah."

14. *the Lord stirred up*, &c.] It would seem that the prevailing indifference and neglect by which they were surrounded had, in some measure at least, damped the ardour and quenched the spirit even of Zerubbabel and Joshua. It needed the same breath of heaven which had first kindled the fire of divine zeal in their hearts, to rouse the now smouldering embers into living flame again (*ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χάρισμα*, 2 Tim. i. 6).

came and did work] The word "came," may here be little more than pleonastic, but perhaps it refers to the coming of the people from the neighbouring towns and country to Jerusalem, as we know they did when the altar was first set up (Ezra. iii. 1). They "did," or executed work (the word work is here a noun, not a verb) in the rebuilding of the Temple. Comp. Ezra v. 1, 2.

15. The note of time in this verse (which obviously belongs to this chapter, and not as in some editions both of Heb. and LXX. and in some MSS. to the next) seems designed to shew how prompt the response was to the prophet's call. Only twenty-three days, little more that is than three weeks, had sufficed to make all necessary preparations, and summon workmen from all the neighbourhood to resume the work (ch. i. 1).

CH. II. 1—9. THE SECOND PROPHECY.

The first prophecy had been one of severe rebuke and earnest call to duty. The second is one of encouragement to those, who having promptly obeyed the first, were in danger of being depressed and disappointed by the comparative meagreness and unworthiness of the results

In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the 2
month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai,
saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, 2
governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech the
high priest and to the residue of the people, saying,
Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first 3
glory?

of their labours. When the foundations of the second Temple were laid some years before this, we read of the distress which its character and dimensions occasioned, to those of the returned captives who were old enough to remember the former Temple in its glory. The joyous shouts of the younger portion of the assembly, who rejoiced to see the sanctuary of their faith restored, blended strangely with the sad lamentations of their elders, who mourned over the departed splendour of the past. Now that a month of vigorous work was beginning to tell, and the contrast which had been apparent even in the foundations stood out in bolder relief in the rising walls of the edifice; now that many an "ancient man," *laudator temporis acti*, had passed his disparaging comment on each new feature of the growing structure, and told with fond regret of the "exceeding magnifical" house (1 Chron. xxii. 5) that had once been there, the danger of dejection and discouragement on the part of the people was increased. With the gracious design of counteracting this, Haggai is directed to deliver a prophecy, which stimulates them to carry on and complete their undertaking, not only by the assurance of the divine presence and favour, but by the promise that in God's good time that house, so mean and despised, should be filled with a glory that should exceed that of Solomon's Temple in the days of its greatest magnificence.

1—5. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OUT OF WHICH THE PROPHECY AROSE.

1. *In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month*] It has been pointed out that this was the seventh and last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 33—36, 39—43); and it has been suggested that the depressing contrast between the former Temple and the present would be heightened and brought home to the people by the rites and services of the festive season. "The return of this festal celebration, especially after a harvest which had turned out very miserably, and showed no signs of the blessing of God, could not fail to call up vividly before the mind the difference between the former times, when Israel was able to assemble in the courts of the Lord's house, and so to rejoice in the blessings of His Grace in the midst of abundant sacrificial meals, and the present time, when the altar of burnt sacrifice might indeed be restored again, and the building of the temple be resumed, but in which there was no prospect of erecting a building that would in any degree answer to the glory of the former temple." Keil's *Minor Prophets*, Clark's Theol. Libr. See also Pusey *ad loc.*

3. *Who is left among you?* &c.] When the foundations of this

And how do ye see it now?
Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?
4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD;
And be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest;
And be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work:
For I *am* with you, saith the LORD of hosts:
5 *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt,

Temple were laid in the second year of Cyrus there were many such. Now after sixteen more years, when seventy years had elapsed since the destruction of Solomon's Temple, the number must have been greatly diminished. Old men of fourscore years or thereabouts they must now have been.

how do ye see it?] Lit., **what (i.e. of what kind) do ye see it.** Comp. 1 Kings ix. 13, where Hiram in displeasure at the cities given him by Solomon exclaims, "what cities are these (pr. *quid urbium hoc*, Gesen.) which thou hast given me, my brother?"

in comparison of it] These words should be omitted as in R. V. They were inserted in A.V. through a misunderstanding of the Hebrew idiom.

"Besides the richness of the sculptures in the former Temple, everything which admitted of it was overlaid with gold; Solomon overlaid the whole house with gold, until he had finished all the house, the whole altar by the oracle, the two cherubims, the floor of the house, the doors of the Holy of Holies and the ornaments of it, the cherubims thereon, and the palm trees he covered with gold fitted upon the carved work; the altar of gold and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was, the ten candlesticks of pure gold, with the flowers and the lamps and the tongs of gold, the bowls, the snuffers and the basons and the spoons and the censers of pure gold, and hinges of pure gold for all the doors of the Temple. The porch that was in the front of the house, twenty cubits broad and 120 cubits high, was overlaid within with pure gold; the house glistened with precious stones; and the gold (it is added) was gold of Parvaim, a land distant of course and unknown to us. Six hundred talents of gold (about £4,320,000) were employed in overlaying the Holy of Holies. The upper chambers were also of gold; the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold." Pusey.

4. *and work*] Lit., **do**, so David says to Solomon, "be strong and be alert, and do," 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. The use of this word, "to do," absolutely, is frequent in Hebrew, often of Almighty God as the agent, the context defining what is done. See Psalm xxii. 31; Ezra x. 4; Isaiah xliv. 23; Amos iii. 6.

5. *According to the word*] The words "according to" are wanting in the Hebrew, but are properly supplied in A. V. and R.V. It has been

So my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.
For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it *is* a little 6
while,

proposed to regard the last clause of ver. 4 as parenthetical, and make the beginning of this verse grammatically dependent on the word "do" in ver. 4. It would then read: "Be strong and do (for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts) the word that I covenanted with you," &c. But such a construction is harsh and the meaning elicited unsatisfactory. The first clause of ver. 5 is thrown out in the abrupt forcible style of Haggai, and gives the ground both of the foregoing and of the following assurance. The ancient covenant with their fathers is as it were called up before them as a witness to the truth of the present promises: "I am with you saith the Lord of Hosts—('see,' 'remember,' or 'there stands') the word which I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt!—and my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." The student of the Greek Testament will be reminded of a somewhat similar construction in St Peter's address to Cornelius and his company, (*τὸν λόγον, κ.τ.λ.* Acts x. 36).

so my spirit remaineth] Or, *and my spirit abode*, R. V. Comp. Is. lxiii. 11; Zech. iv. 6.

6—9. THE PROPHECY ITSELF.

In accordance with the ancient covenant, as a fresh manifestation of its perpetual virtue and undying life (for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," Rom. xi. 29), God will yet again interfere on behalf of His Church and people. And this interference shall be on a scale of grandeur surpassing even the solemn pomp of Mount Sinai, and shall result in a world-wide fame and accumulated glory to the Temple, such as in the palmiest days of old it had never known.

6. *saith the Lord of hosts*] The frequent recurrence of this expression, which is found here four times in as many verses, is a marked feature of the prophecies of Haggai and of Malachi, and of some sections of that of Zechariah. It is of the nature of an appeal to the power and resources of Almighty God, either as here to awaken the confidence, or as elsewhere to subdue the contumacy of the Jews. The expression is properly elliptical for "Jehovah (the God) of hosts." See Appendix, note A.

yet once, it is a little while] It has been proposed to render this: "Yet one (a) little while, and I will shake," &c. Luther has, *Es ist noch ein Kleines dahin*, and Calvin, *Adhuc unum modicum hoc.* Similarly Maurer and Hengstenberg. But grammatical considerations are in favour of the A. V. and R. V.

yet once] or, *once again.* "By the word *yet* he looks back to the first great shaking of the moral world, when God's revelation by Moses and to His people broke upon the darkness of the pagan world, to be a monument against heathen error till Christ should come; *once* looks on and conveys that God would again shake the world, but *once* only, under the one dispensation of the Gospel, which should endure to the end." Pusey.

And I *will* shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land;*

a little while] The explanation which interprets this to mean little in the sight of God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, is forced and unsatisfactory. "The prophet," as Hengstenberg points out (*Christol.* iii. p. 270, Clark's *Translation*), "lays stress upon the brevity of the time in this case, for the purpose of administering consolation. But only what is short in human estimation would be fitted to accomplish this." Nor is it better to say that the 517 years which were to elapse to the birth of Christ were *a little while* "in respect to the time which had elapsed from the fall of Adam, upon which God promised the Saviour Christ," or "in respect to the Christian law, which has now lasted above 1800 years, and the time of the end does not seem yet nigh." Pusey. 500 years is not *a little while* in comparison of any known epoch of human history. The true explanation would seem to be that it is not the actual birth of Christ, but the preparation for that event in the "shaking of all nations," (ver. 7) to which the *little while* refers. The whole grand future, embracing not only the first but the second coming of Christ and the final consummation of all things, is indeed included in the prophecy. But it was the beginning of the great drama, not its last act, that was then closely at hand. That beginning was the then immediate object of the Church's hope; in that she was to welcome the promise and the presage of all that should follow. Time alone would unfold the plot. In prophetic prospect coming events were confused and blended, just as in our Lord's great prophecy were the circumstances of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world. But the beginning was near at hand. "This shaking commenced immediately. The axe was already laid at the root of the Persian empire, whose subsequent and visible fall was but the manifestation of a far earlier one, which had been hidden from view." (Hengstenberg). Our Lord's use of a similar expression when He says to His disciples, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me" (St John xvi. 17), may serve to illustrate its significance here. On His lips the "little while" had a three-fold reference; first to the few days before they should see Him again in His risen body; next to the few weeks before He would come to them in the Pentecostal gift of His Spirit; lastly to the interval, which in the retrospect will seem "a little while," before His second personal advent.

I will shake the heavens, &c.] That political convulsions are here predicted is clear from the clause in ver. 7, "I will shake all nations;" as well as from the passage, ch. ii. 21, 22, which clearly refers back to this prediction, and explains the shaking of the heaven and the earth by the words, "I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen," etc. ver. 22. But there is no reason to exclude physical convulsions also. In the earlier revelation of God on Mount Sinai, to which, as we have seen, there is an allusion here, they bore a prominent part. And when, as the inspired writer to the Hebrews teaches us, this prophecy shall receive its final accomplishment in the "removing of those things that are

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations 7
shall come:
And I will fill this house *with* glory, saith the LORD of
hosts.

shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain," the whole material frame of the universe will be convulsed. Hebrews xii. 27, with 2 Peter iii. 10—12.

7. *I will shake all nations*] "There was a general shaking upon earth before our Lord came. Empires rose and fell. The Persian fell before Alexander's; Alexander's world-empire was ended by his sudden death in youth; of his four successors two only continued, and they, too, fell before the Romans; then were the Roman civil wars, until under Augustus, the temple of Janus was shut." Pusey. The second and third of Daniel's four great kingdoms, the Medo-Persian and the Græco-Macedonian, and (if with some we identify it with the successors of Alexander in Syria and Egypt) the fourth kingdom also, were to pass away before our Lord appeared. Daniel ii. 36—45.

the desire of all nations shall come] Setting aside various other renderings of these words which have little to recommend them—e. g. "I will shake all nations, and they (all nations) shall come with the desire (the desirable things) of all nations (in their hands as offerings);" or, "they shall come to the desire of all nations;" or yet again, "the choicest of nations, *nobilissimi omnium populorum*, shall come,"—and adhering to the rendering of the A. V., we have two principal interpretations to choose between. There is the view that Christ Himself is here spoken of as "the Desire of all nations" (*et veniet desideratus gentibus*, Vulgate), i.e. He for Whom all nations consciously or unconsciously yearn, in Whom alone all the longings of the human heart find satisfaction. Very beautiful, as well as very Christian, is the idea thus conveyed: Christ, "*the longed-for of the nations* before He came, by that mute longing of need for that which it wants as the parched ground thirsteth for the rain." Archbishop Trench has worked it out in some particulars in a course of Hulsean lectures under the title, "Christ, the Desire of all nations, or the unconscious prophesyings of heathendom." But interesting as is this view, and strong the temptation to maintain it at any cost, there are objections to it which cannot satisfactorily be overcome. The word "desire" is in the singular number, the verb "shall come" is in the plural. It is literally "the desire of all nations they shall come." To the difficulty of understanding this of a person it does not seem a sufficient answer, to describe it as "the delicacy of the phrase, whereby manifoldness is combined in unity, the object of desire containing in itself many objects of desire;" as "a great heathen master of language said to his wife, 'fare you well, my longings,' i.e. she who manifoldly met the longings of his heart, and had in herself manifold gifts to content them[1]" (Pusey). Still more difficult is it to

[1] It has recently been pointed out by a writer in the *Guardian* newspaper, that the words here quoted by Dr Pusey, "Valete, mea desideria, valete," do not refer to his wife Terentia alone, but to his wife, son and daughter, to all three of

8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts:

make this view harmonise with the context. The following verse is, *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.* It is forced and unnatural to make these words mean, "I have no need of gold or silver. The whole wealth of the world is mine. I could adorn this house with silver and gold if I would; but such things are worthless in my sight. I will fill it with divine and spiritual glory instead." Comp. Ps. l. 10—12.

We are led, therefore, to adopt another view, which has been accepted by some ancient and most modern commentators. According to it the passage may be paraphrased as follows: "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations (the object of desire, that which each nation holds most desirable, its best and chiefest treasure, 'the desirable things,' R. V.) shall come (the plural verb denoting the manifoldness and variety of the gifts); and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. However distributed, and by whomsoever possessed, the treasures of the whole world are still in my hand, and I can dispose and bestow them at my will. Doubt not, therefore, my promise that they shall be poured forth as willing offerings to beautify and adorn my house." Thus understood, the prophecy agrees substantially with many other prophecies of the Old Testament. Thus Isaiah writes, "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces (i.e. 'resources' or 'wealth:' it is as here a singular noun with a plural verb) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee:" and he adds in almost verbal accordance with this prophecy of Haggai, "they shall bring gold and incense," and "I will glorify the house of my glory." Isaiah lx. 5—7, 11, 13, 17. See also lxi. 6. Nor is the Messianic reference of the prophecy excluded or obscured by this interpretation. He who satisfies the desire of all nations will call forth and receive the willing offering to Himself of all they hold most desirable, in grateful acknowledgment of the satisfaction they find in Him. It was because the babe of Bethlehem was the desire of the Eastern sages that they first fell down and worshipped Him, and then opened their treasures and presented unto Him gold and frankincense and myrrh. Reaching on as we have seen to the consummation of all things, the prophecy includes all Christian gifts and offerings to the temple of God, material or spiritual, and will find its full accomplishment in that city of which it is written, "the kings and the nations of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it." Rev. xxi. 24, 26. (See a letter on the interpretation of this passage by the late Bp. Thirlwall, *Essays*, Appendix, p. 467.)

9. *The glory of this latter house*, &c.] Rather, **the latter glory of**

whom the Epistle is addressed. A glance at the Epistle (xiv. 2) will suffice to shew that this is the case, and that consequently they have no bearing upon the passage under consideration.

And in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the 10

this house shall be greater than the former (as in R.V.); the Temple, whether as built by Solomon or now rebuilt, being regarded as one and the same house, the one only house of God. See ver. 3.

The glory here promised is first and most obviously material glory, the desirable things, the precious gifts of all nations. But it includes the spiritual glory, without which in the sight of God material splendour is worthless and unacceptable. Christ Himself, present bodily in the temple on Mount Sion during His life on earth, present spiritually in His Church now, present in the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, of which He is the Temple (Rev. xxi. 22), calling forth the spiritual worship and devotion, and as the legitimate and necessary expression of that, the wealth and treasure of all nations, is the glory here predicted. But all this is rather implied, to be discerned by the Church in the growing light of its fulfilment, than expressed, to be understood by those to whom the prophecy was first delivered.

10—19. THE THIRD PROPHECY.

By a reference to the ceremonial law, as officially interpreted by the priests in answer to questions addressed to them, Haggai again impresses upon the people the truth, that the dearth and distress from which they had hitherto suffered was the consequence of their national sin in neglecting to rebuild the temple, and again promises that now that they had put away that sin, and were honestly giving themselves to the work of restoration, the blessing of God should rest upon them. The sanctifying influence of flesh, which by being offered to God in sacrifice had become holy, could only extend, so the priests on the authority of the law declared, to that with which it came into first and immediate contact. Beyond that limit its efficacy did not reach. The thing touched by it was itself made holy, but did not become in its turn a vehicle of holiness to anything beyond. Not so, however, was it with that which by contact with ceremonial uncleanness had become polluted. That which by touching a corpse had contracted defilement was not only unclean itself, but propagated uncleanness, and conveyed it to everything with which it came in contact. So was it with the Jewish nation in the sight of God, as represented by the returned captives. They might argue indeed that they had rebuilt the altar of Jehovah on their first return. But that good act, if it stood alone, even had there been no subsequent disobedience to vitiate it, would only, like the holy flesh making holy the garment in which it was wrapped, have extended its influence a little way. The altar would have sanctified the gift which was offered upon it. On the other hand the sin of the people in neglecting to rebuild the temple, like the touch of the corpse, not only contaminated themselves, but brought moral pollution and consequent blight and disaster upon all the works of their hands.

10. *the four and twentieth day of the ninth month*] This was in

second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by
11 Haggai the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
12 Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall
13 it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean *by* a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered

November or December. The people had now for three months (i. 14, 15) been actively engaged in the work of restoration. Two months had elapsed (ii. 1) since they were encouraged, under the depression caused by the comparative meanness of the second temple, by a prophecy of the surpassing glory which should accrue to it. Their constancy in the work is now further rewarded, by a renewed promise of the removal of the blight and famine which their neglect had caused, and of the full return of plenty and prosperity.

11. *Ask now the priests concerning the law*] Lit., **ask of the priests law, or the law.** The construction is a double accusative after the verb ask. (Comp. Is. xlv. 11.) The word law may be used here and in Malachi ii. 7, without the article, in the sense of "instruction," or "direction." Such "law" or instruction would, however, always be derived from "*the* law" of God by Moses, of which the priests were the authorised interpreters. Lev. x. 11; Deut. xvii. 8—13, xxxiii. 10.

12. *If one bear*] Lit. **Lo! one bears.** "See, there is a man bearing—what will happen?" An emphatic Oriental way of saying, "suppose, put the case, that one bears." So in Jeremiah iii. 1 we have, "Lo! a man puts away his wife." And in 2 Chron. vii. 13, where "if" occurs three times in A.V. the Hebrew has "lo" the first and second time, and "if" the third time.

holy flesh] i.e. flesh which has been offered in sacrifice to God. Comp. Jer. xi. 15.

the skirt] Lit. **the wing.** So πτέρυξ, πτερύγιον are used for the skirts or flaps of a cloak or dress.

meat] i.e. *food*, or *eatables*. LXX. βρῶμα.

the priests answered and said, No] In Lev. vi. 27 we read of the sin-offering, "Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy." The garment therefore in which the flesh was carried would be holy, but the holiness would not extend, so the priests ruled it, to anything which the garment touched.

13. *unclean by a dead body*] Lit. **unclean by a person.** The full phrase, "*a dead* person, or body," occurs Lev. xxi. 11; Num. vi. 6; but the word "dead" is often left to be understood as here and Lev. xxi. 1, xxii. 4. The law of ceremonial uncleanness as attaching to death (under which there lay, no doubt, the moral idea that death polluted because it was the offspring and the wages of sin) is found in Num. xix. 11—22.

shall it be unclean?] as clearly laid down in Num. xix. 22. Com-

and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and 14
said,

So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD;
And so *is* every work of their hands;
And *that* which they offer there *is* unclean.

pare, for the moral counterpart, James ii. 10, where Dean Plumptre observes: "This seems at first of the nature of an ethical paradox, but practically it states a deep moral truth. If we wilfully transgress one commandment we shew that in principle we sit loose to all. It is but accident, or fear, or the absence of temptation, that prevents our transgressing them also. Actual transgression in one case involves potential transgression in all." *Camb. Bible for Schools*, St James, p. 68.

14. This verse contains the application to the present case of the Jews of the principles brought out by the foregoing questions. The second principle, as to the transmission of uncleanness, is first applied in the former clauses of the verse, while the first principle, as to the non-transmission of holiness, is referred to in the last clause. "So," resembling the case just described, "is this people and this nation, before Me, saith the Lord." It is polluted in itself, like the man who is "unclean by a dead body," through its disobedience, and neglect of my Temple. "And so," defiled through this act of disobedience, just as whatever he touches is defiled by the touch of him who has had contact with the dead, "is every work of their hands." The blight that rests on all their industry and labour, that mars and withers every work in which their hands are engaged, is the punishment and the proof of the moral uncleanness, which residing in themselves extends to all that they put their hand to. "And that which they offer there," (on the altar which they have built to My Name in Jerusalem,) so far from sanctifying their works, as they vainly think, is itself through the pervading influence of their sin "unclean." The sanctifying influence of the altar on which they pride themselves would at best but have reached a little way. The prevailing power of their disobedience vitiates all such sanctifying influence, and renders the very offerings on the altar itself unclean.

this people and so is this nation] See ch. i. 2. The addition of the word "nation," the word commonly used for the heathen nations of the world, as distinguished from the Jews who were the "people" of God, has been thought to be a further sign of contempt and rejection. But the two words are used together of Israel in Zeph. ii. 9, where no such meaning can be intended.

there] On the altar built on their return from Babylon. Ezra iii. 3.

15—19. The great moral lesson of the Book is again inculcated. Let them fix their attention on the long period of their neglect of God and His House; the eighteen years that had intervened, between the laying of the foundation of the Temple and the 24th day of the ninth

15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward,
From before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple
of the LORD:
16 Since those *days* were, when *one* came to a heap of twenty
measures, there were *but* ten:
When *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels*
out of the press, there were *but* twenty.

month of the second year of Darius, on which this prophecy was uttered. Let them lay to heart the fact that it had been throughout a period of distress and dearth, of gloom and darkness. Let them note the bright contrast, the plenty and prosperity, which their return to God and care for His House and worship should immediately introduce. "From this day will I bless you, saith the Lord."

The period which they are to consider is first described in ver. 15—17, and then again, with a view to impress the lesson, in ver. 18, 19, the limits of time being now more clearly defined, and the promise of blessing introduced.

15. The A.V. is a little obscure. The verse may be rendered more clearly thus:

And now consider, I pray you, from this day (the 24th day of the ninth month, on which the prophet was speaking, ver. 10—18) **and upward** (that is backward), **from** (the time when) **not yet stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord.**

This is the other limit from which the reckoning is to be made, the time when the foundation of the temple had been laid, but no further progress in building had taken place, no "stone upon stone" had been added. It answers to the clause in ver. 18, "from the time when the temple of the Lord was founded."

16. *Since those days were*] Lit. **from their being.** We may supply either "days" as in A.V. or "things," since those things were, i.e. that reprehensible conduct of yours. The R.V. renders happily, *through all that time.*

when one came] Lit. **to come**, i.e. there was coming, or one came.

twenty measures] The word "measures" is not in the Hebrew. The LXX. supply *seahs*, (σάτα), the Vulg. *bushels* (modiorum). But the word is perhaps purposely omitted, because the prophet wishes to lay stress on the proportion. The heap, which when it was laid in the barn contained twenty measures (what measures they were it matters not for his present purpose), was found by the owner when he came to use it to have dwindled down to ten. The words as they stand are very forcible, "To come to a heap of twenty and there were ten."

there were] The introduction of the verb "were" is perhaps intended to be emphatic: q. d. "the heap was expected to be twenty, *it was* (in real existence) ten." And so again lower down in the same verse.

pressfat] i.e. the lower vat or reservoir into which the must squeezed out from the grapes in the press or upper vat flowed. "From the scanty notices contained in the Bible, we gather that the wine-presses of the

I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail 17
In all the labours of your hands;
Yet ye *turned* not to me, saith the LORD.
Consider now from this day and upward, 18

Jews consisted of two receptacles or vats placed at different elevations, in the upper one of which the grapes were trodden, while the lower one received the ex-pressed juice. The two vats are mentioned together only in Joel iii. 13:—'The press (*gath*) is full: the fats (*yekebim*) overflow'—the upper vat being full of fruit, the lower one overflowing with the must..... The two vats were usually dug or hewn out of the solid rock (Is. v. 2, margin; Matt. xxi. 33). Ancient wine-presses, so constructed, are still to be seen in Palestine, one of which is thus described by Robinson:—'Advantage had been taken of a ledge of rock; on the upper side a shallow vat had been dug out, eight feet square and fifteen inches deep. Two feet lower down another smaller vat was excavated, four feet square by three feet deep. The grapes were trodden in the shallow upper vat, and the juice drawn off by a hole at the bottom (still remaining) into the lower vat.' B. R. III. 137, 603)." *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Wine-press.

fifty vessels out of the press] Lit. **fifty purah**. The A.V. supplies the word "*vessels*" after "fifty," just as it does "*measures*" after "twenty," in the former part of the verse, and then taking the word "purah" to mean the press (as it does in Is. lxiii. 3, the only other place in which it occurs), again supplies "out of" before it. This preserves the parallelism between the two parts of the verse. Perhaps, however, "purah" may here mean a liquid measure (LXX. μετρητής); possibly, as Keil suggests, "the measure which was generally obtained from one filling of the wine-press with grapes;" lit. "fifty wine-presses." The earlier copies of R. V. print vessels in italics, and leave *purah* untranslated. The mistake however has now been corrected.

17. *I smote you with blasting and with mildew*] "Two diseases of the corn which Moses had foretold (Deut. xxviii. 22) as chastisements on disobedience, and God's infliction of which Amos had spoken of in these selfsame words (Amos iv. 9). Haggai adds *the hail* as destructive of the vines (Psalm lxxviii. 47)." Pusey.

labours] Rather, **work**. R. V.

yet ye turned not to me] Lit. **yet not (no-such-thing-as) yourselves to me**. The word "turning," or a similar word, may be supplied from the parallel passage in Amos iv. 9: "yet there was no turning of yourselves to me." The negation is a strong one, and denies any single instance of such turning.

18. *from this day and upward*] The Jews are again exhorted to fix their attention upon the period of time mentioned in ver. 15. It is first described as, *from this day and upward, or backward.* Then each limit of the period is more clearly defined. "This day" is "the four and twentieth day of the ninth month," on which this prophecy was uttered, ver. 10. The "upward" or "backward" extends to the

From the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*,
Even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S
temple was laid, consider *it*.
19 *Is* the seed yet in the barn?
Yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate,
and the olive tree, hath not brought forth:
From this day will I bless *you*.

other limit from which the reckoning is to be made, viz. "the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid," i.e. the day when the actual foundation was completed in the year after their return from Babylon. This is made clearer in R. V. by the substitution of, *since the day*, for *even from the day*. This period they are again called upon to "consider," and to note well the dark cloud of adversity that brooded over it.

19. *Is the seed yet in the barn?*] i.e. Is it any longer in the barn? Is it not all exhausted and used up? The meagre yield of the blighted corn was soon consumed and the granary left empty. Some have thought that by "the seed" is here meant what would be required to sow the land for another year, and that the dearth and distress are heightened by the fact that there is not even corn enough left to sow. But as the word is frequently used, not of seed corn, but of produce (e.g. 1 Sam. viii. 15; Isaiah xxiii. 3; Job xxxix. 12), and as the remainder of the verse refers to produce, it is better taken in that sense here.

yea, as yet] There is no reason to depart from the usual meaning of the Hebrew word here rendered "as yet," viz. "unto," or "as regards," "And unto or as regards (extending our notice from the corn to) the vine, etc. it (i.e. each one of these trees) hath not brought forth (fruit)." It would then best accord with the English idiom to leave the word untranslated, as in R. V. The rendering of A. V. is however thought by some to be supported by Job i. 18; 1 Sam. xiv. 19.

from this day will I bless you] It might be asked, why not from the day three months earlier than this (ch. i. 14, 15), when they first resumed the building of the temple? It has been suggested in explanation that up to this time, though they had indeed begun again to build, they had been slack and remiss in their efforts, but that from this day, instigated by this fresh appeal of Haggai, they had taken a new departure of zeal and earnestness, and that consequently from this day the blessing was to begin. But there is no proof whatever that this was so, and it is therefore better to suppose that up to this day the effects of the failure of the last harvest were still apparent, and no outward change had yet taken place in their prospects. "He would then say, that even in these last months, since they had begun the work, there were as yet no signs for the better. There was yet no *seed in the barn*, the harvest having been blighted, and the fruit-trees stripped by the hail before the close of the sixth month, when they resumed the work. Yet though there were as yet no signs of change, no earnest that the promise should

And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in 20
the four and twentieth *day* of the month, saying, Speak to 21
Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying,
I *will* shake the heavens and the earth;
And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, 22
And I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen;
And I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them;
And the horses and their riders shall come down,
Every one by the sword of his brother.
In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, 23

be fulfilled, God pledges His word, *from this day I will bless you.*" Pusey.

CH. II. 20—23. THE FOURTH PROPHECY.

In a short, final prophecy, uttered on the same day as that which preceded it, Haggai addresses Zerubbabel as the Ruler and Representative of the Jewish nation, and the Predecessor and Type of the true King of the Jews. The former prediction (ver. 6, 7) of the shaking of heaven and earth, and the overthrow of mighty nations is repeated. But to Zerubbabel, and in him to the nation which he represented, a gracious promise of safety and distinction is vouchsafed.

20. *again*] *the second time.* R. V.

22. *I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms,* &c.] After repeating, in ver. 21, the prediction of ver. 6, "I will shake the heavens and the earth," the prophet expands in this verse the prediction of ver. 7, "I will shake all nations." This is made more clear in R. V. by keeping the same English word *nations* (*heathen*, A. V.) for the same Heb. word in this verse and verse 7. The terms here employed are too wide to be satisfied by any event in the life of Zerubbabel: "There was in Zerubbabel's time no shaking of the heaven or of nations. Darius had indeed to put down an unusual number of rebellions in the first few years after his accession; but, although he magnified himself on occasion of their suppression, they were only so many distinct and unconcerted revolts, each under its own head. All were far away in the distant East. The Persian *empire*, spread 'probably over 2,000,000 square miles, or more than half of modern Europe,' was not threatened; no foreign enemy assailed it; one impostor only claimed the throne of Darius. This would, if successful, have been, like his own accession, a change of dynasty, affecting nothing externally. But neither were lasting, some were very trifling." Pusey. The prophecy reaches forth to the more distant future, and still awaits its full accomplishment.

shall come down] i.e. *be brought low.* Comp. Is. xxxiv. 7.

Will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD,
And will make thee as a signet:
For I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

23. *will I take thee*] In such expressions as this (comp. Deut. iv. 20; 2 Kings xiv. 21, xxiii. 30) the word "take" simply introduces the following action. It has not therefore the sense which some have here given it, "I will take thee into my care and protection."

as a signet] This promise is referred to by the writer of the Book Ecclesiasticus, in his panegyric of the "famous men" of his nation: "How shall we magnify Zorobabel? even he was as a signet on the right hand," ch. xlix. 11. Among the Orientals great honour and importance attached to signets or seals. They were often "engraved stones pierced through their length and hung by a string or chain from the arm or neck, or set in rings for the finger" (Song of Sol. viii. 6; Jer. xxii. 24). "The custom prevalent among the Babylonians of carrying seals is mentioned by Herodotus i. 195... and the signet ring is noticed as an ordinary part of a man's equipment in the case of Judah (Genesis xxxviii. 18), who probably, like many modern Arabs, wore it suspended by a string (rendered 'bracelets' in E. V.) from his neck or arm." *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Seal.

I have chosen thee] "With these words the Messianic promise made to David was transferred to Zerubbabel and his family among David's descendants, and would be fulfilled in his person in just the same way as the promise given to David, that God would make him the highest among the kings of the earth (Ps. lxxxix. 27). The fulfilment culminates in Jesus Christ, the son of David, and descendant of Zerubbabel (Matt. i. 12; Luke iii. 27), in whom Zerubbabel was made the signet-ring of Jehovah. Jesus Christ has raised up the kingdom of His father David again, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke i. 32, 33). Even though it may appear oppressed and deeply humiliated for the time by the power of the kingdoms of the heathen, it will never be crushed and destroyed, but will break in pieces all these kingdoms, and destroy them, and will itself endure for ever (Dan. ii. 44; Heb. xii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 24)." Keil *ad loc.* Clark's Theological Library.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

Of the Prophet Zechariah, as of his colleague and contemporary Haggai, very little is known. He tells us himself that he was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo (i. 1). And though in the Book of Ezra he is called "the son of Iddo" (v. 1, vi. 14), the simple and satisfactory explanation of the apparent discrepancy seems to be, that while the historian uses the word "son" in its less restricted sense of descendant, and passes over Berechiah, who never became the head of the family, dying probably early and without distinction, the prophet himself gives us, as it is natural he should do, the actual order of descent. If the Iddo thus spoken of is to be identified, as with much probability he may be, with the person of that name mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah, we have this explanation confirmed by the fact, that while Iddo is among the "priests" who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua (xii. 4), "Zechariah of Iddo" takes his place amongst "the priests, the chief of the fathers," under Joiakim, the son of Joshua, in the next generation (ver. 12, 16). If this view be adopted, it follows that Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet, and that, since his grandfather was still living when the first caravan returned under Zerubbabel, he must have been a comparatively young man when sixteen years later he entered upon his prophetical office. That he was born in Babylon is highly probable. Tradition associates him with Haggai in his connection with

the Psalter and the Liturgical worship of the restored Temple, and also with the Great Synagogue, of which he is said to have been a member (see Introduction to Haggai, Chapter II.). "The patristic notices of the Prophet are worth nothing. According to these, he exercised his prophetic office in Chaldæa, and wrought many miracles there; returned to Jerusalem at an advanced age, where he discharged the duties of the priesthood, and where he died, and was buried by the side of Haggai." *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Zechariah. See also *Zechariah and his Prophecies*, Introd. xvii., xviii., Rev. C. H. H. Wright.

The scanty information thus obtained accords with what little may be gathered, respecting the prophet, from his undoubted writings. His birth and early education in Babylon account for his frequent use, in common with Ezekiel and Daniel, of visions and allegories; the Divine Spirit adapting Himself, as ever, to the capacity and training of the human instrument, in imparting His revelations. His visions themselves have been thought to be "tinged with Persian imagery," "as might be expected from one whose prime had been spent under Persian rule." "He saw the earth, as it now presented itself to the enlarged vision of those who had listened to the Wise Men of Chaldæa, its four corners growing into the four horns that toss and gore the lesser powers of the world (i. 18, 19); the celestial messengers riding on horses, red or dappled, hurrying through the myrtle-groves that then clothed the base of Olivet, or from the four quarters of the heavens driving in chariots, each with its coloured horses, to and fro, across the Persian empire (i. 8—11, vi. 1—8), as in the vast machinery of the posts for which it was celebrated (Herod. VIII. 98; Esther iii. 13, 15), and bringing back the tidings of war and peace." *Jewish Church*, III. 102. It has also been pointed out (*Dict. of Bible*), that "the vision of the woman in the ephah is oriental in character," and that Zechariah "is the only one of the prophets who speaks of Satan."

CHAPTER II.

UNITY OF THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

Much difference of opinion exists amongst scholars upon the question, whether the Book of Zechariah, as it now stands in our Bibles, is the work of a single author, or contains the writings of two, or even of three, different persons, which have been brought together under one title. The first eight chapters are universally ascribed to Zechariah. The remaining six are of disputed authorship. In dealing with this and similar Biblical questions, it is important clearly to understand that they are purely critical in their character, and must be discussed and decided on grounds of scholarship alone. It is a mistake to suppose that the higher question of the inspiration and authority of the Bible is involved in them. It may be quite true that those who are agreed on this latter question will often be found on the same side, in the controversies to which those former questions give rise. But this is by no means exclusively the case; and the interests of truth and of scholarship, which is the handmaid of truth, alike require that such higher considerations should not be unnecessarily introduced into investigations, which are properly independent of them. It is unworthy of a scholar and alien from the calm, candid spirit of a seeker after truth, to taunt an opponent with the name of "orthodox," or "rationalist," instead of weighing his reasons, and accepting or refuting the arguments which he adduces. A moment's reflection will suffice to convince us that it is quite possible to acknowledge unreservedly, as an integral part of God's Word written, and to reverence accordingly, a Book of which the authorship is uncertain or unknown. Of the Book of Job, of many of the Psalms, of the larger part of the historical Books of the Old Testament, we do not know the authors. The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews will probably be a moot question as long as the world lasts. Yet all these writings hold their place in the Canon of

Scripture, on equal terms with those of which the authorship is undoubted.

Approaching, then, in this spirit the particular question before us of the unity of the Book of Zechariah, we are met at the outset by the fact, that its unity does not appear ever to have been doubted, either by Jews or Christians, till our own countryman, Joseph Mede, avowed his disbelief in it some two centuries ago. The first of the considerations, by which Mede and the earlier critics who followed him were led to their conclusion, was the quotation by St Matthew (xxvii. 9) of the well-known passage in our present Book of Zechariah (xi. 12, 13), as a prophecy not of his but of Jeremiah's. Regarding the Evangelist's reference as an authoritative correction of the received tradition on the subject, they set themselves, with this supposed clue in their hands, to study the later chapters of this Book, and found in their contents much that seemed to them to warrant the belief that they belonged to Jeremiah or his times. "There is no scripture," writes Mede, "saith they are Zachary's; but there is scripture saith they are Jeremy's, as this of the Evangelist." But whatever may be thought of the argument from the quotation in the New Testament (and few modern scholars will be found to attach much importance to it), the fact remains, that Zechariah's authorship of the whole Book which bears his name was for so long a time unquestioned. And it is a fact, which without over-estimating it, has a right to have its due weight in the controversy. How came these writings to be collected into a single volume and inscribed with a single name? *Ob similitudinem argumenti*, Mede would reply. But the reply is inadmissible, because it is the *dissimilarity* of the contents of the former and latter portions, which is most strongly urged by those who impugn the common authorship of the whole. You cannot first say, "These documents are so unlike in style, in subject-matter and in the historical stand-point of their writers, that though they bear a common name we are unable to accept them as the work of the same author," and then go on to argue, "Nevertheless, it is easy to account for their being attributed to the same author, because of the great similarity between them"

Except as regards style (for criticism of style was and is a thing unknown to Jews), whatever dissimilarity exists must have been felt, at least as forcibly, by the compilers of the Canon as it is by ourselves. And if the tradition be trustworthy, that Zechariah himself took part in its compilation, it is difficult to conceive how he could have allowed the utterances of one or more earlier and anonymous prophets to have been added, without note or comment, as an appendix to his own. To say that some of the Psalms are anonymous, and yet are included in the Psalter, which as a whole is ascribed to David, is to urge a wholly irrelevant argument. It is one thing to insert in a collection of lyric poems some compositions by unknown authors, and then to inscribe the book with the name of the most distinguished and principal author of the collection. It is quite another thing to introduce into a series of twelve compositions, each bearing its author's name, one or two documents, of greater bulk than some of the twelve, and to introduce them, neither in their chronological place, nor at the end of the series, as independent books, similar in character, though of unknown or undeclared authorship; but in the midst of the series, and as an avowed continuation of one of the compositions, from which, however, they stand apart both in date and contents.

Nor is this argument for the unity of the book weakened, as it might materially be, by a general agreement amongst those who controvert it, as to the date and authorship of the last six chapters. If even a majority of competent critics, who espouse that side in the controversy, were at one as to the approximate time in which the later Zechariah or Zechariahs lived and prophesied, there would be considerable weight in their conclusion. But so far from this being the case, not only do they differ among themselves, as to the single or dual authorship of these chapters, but in assigning a date to them, their criticism, as Dr Pusey expresses it, "reels to and fro in a period of nearly 500 years, from the earliest of the prophets to a period a century after Malachi, and that on historical and philological grounds." "One must admit," writes one of them, "that the division of opinions as to the real author of this section and his time, as also the attempt to

appropriate single oracles of this portion to different periods, leave the result of criticism simply *negative;* whereas, on the other hand, the view itself, since it is not carried through exegetically, lacks the completion of its proof. It is not till criticism becomes *positive*, and evidences its truth in the explanation of details, that it attains its completion; which is not, in truth, always possible" (Hitzig, quoted by Pusey).

The principal arguments, which have been adduced on both sides of the controversy, will be found fully and impartially stated in the Article on Zechariah, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and reference is made to many of them in the notes of this Commentary. The following brief summary of them may be sufficient here.

A. The objections against the unity of the Book may be classified, generally, under two heads:

1. Differences in style and other features of composition, pointing to difference of authorship.

2. Historical and chronological references, indicating a difference in the time at which the writers who make them lived.

1. (1) It is impossible to read through the Book of Zechariah, as it now stands in our Bibles, without being struck by the great change of style, which meets us when we pass from the earlier (chaps. i.—viii.) to the later (chaps. ix.—xiv.) portion of the Book. The earlier is for the most part prosaic and unimpassioned in style and diction. The later is full of poetic fire and fervour.

(2) Special phrases and idioms, such as come to be favourite forms of expression with a writer, and peculiarities which serve to identify him, are found in each of the two divisions of the Book; but in neither case do those of one division occur in the other. For example, the phrases, "The word of Jehovah came unto me" (i. 7; iv. 8; vi. 9; vii. 1, 4, 8; viii. 1, 18), "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts" (i. 4, 16, 17; vi. 12; viii. 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23), "I lifted up my eyes and saw" (i. 18; ii. 1; v. 1; vi. 1), are found repeatedly in the first division, but never in the second; while the common phrase of the second division, "In that day" (ix. 16; xi. 11; xii. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; xiii. 1, 2, 4; xiv. 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21), is altogether wanting in the first.

(3) Similar differences are the mention of his own name and the names of other contemporary persons by the writer of the first division only (i. 1, 7; iii. 1; iv. 6; vi. 10, 14; vii. 1, 2, 8); his notes of time (i. 1, 7; vii. 1), as against the formula of introduction prefixed to separate sections of the second division (ix. 1; xii. 1); and the disappearance of "Satan" (iii. 1, 2), and of the "seven eyes" (iii. 9; iv. 10), from the later portion of the Book.

(4) The figures and imagery of the two divisions have nothing in common. The visions of the first division, with their mystic significance, needing an angel to interpret them, give place in the second division to the allegory or dramatic representation of the wise and foolish shepherds. And in that division only the images of the shepherd and the sheep, and of Jehovah as the Captain of His people, with the warlike accompaniments of charger and trumpet and weapons, are introduced.

2. The objections to the unity of the Book on historical and chronological grounds are drawn from references and allusions, both to the Jews themselves and to other nations, which are held to argue that a different date must be assigned to their authors.

(1) As regards the Jews themselves, it is urged that the general scope of the two divisions of the prophecy proves conclusively, that they belong to different eras in their national history. For, while the former division is directed to encouraging them to rebuild their temple and city, by promises of immediate success and future prosperity, the latter, if it had appeared at the same time, would have been eminently calculated to produce a precisely opposite effect. Its tendency would have been to discourage and deter them, inasmuch as it abounds in vivid pictures of the destruction of Jerusalem and the future miseries of the nation.

Other considerations, drawn from the internal history of the Jews, which seem to favour an earlier date for the closing prophecies of the Book, are the reference to the two Kingdoms as still standing (ix. 10, 13; x. 6), while at the same time the union between them is at an end (xi. 14), which, when regard is had to the threat against Damascus (ix. 1), might seem to point to the

coalition between Israel and Damascus against Judah (2 Kings xvi. 5, 6); and again the state of anarchy predicted (xi. 4—8), which finds its parallel in the period immediately following the death of Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xv. 8—15).

(2) As regards other nations, it is alleged that when the later chapters were penned, "the pride of Assyria was at its height (chaps. x., xi.), and the Jews had already suffered from it;" and also that "Egypt and Assyria are *both* formidable powers" (x. 9—11).

The conclusion arrived at is, that whether we have respect to the Jews themselves or to foreign nations, the internal evidence of the later chapters is in favour of their being the work of a contemporary of Isaiah.

The same, or similar, arguments are employed by those who would assign different dates and authors, not only to the first and second divisions, but to the two sections of the second division of this Book.

B. All these objections have been met, by what have been deemed by those who produced them satisfactory answers.

1. In contravention of the objections from style it has been alleged:

(1) That the difference in the two divisions of the Book is not greater than may be reasonably accounted for by the difference of subject-matter in the two. They differ "as the style of the narrator differs from the style of the orator." And this judgment has been fortified by observing that when prophecy proper, as distinct from narration or description, enters into the first division of the Book, the style at once approaches more nearly to that of the second division (e.g. ii. 4—13).

(2) The same consideration of subject-matter, together with the fact that the prophet is dealing, in the earlier part of his Book, directly and immediately with his contemporaries, and with the actual condition at the time of the city and nation, is thought sufficiently to explain his introduction into that part only of dates and names, and his use of phrases, which in the later part give place to others more suited to his altered theme and circumstances.

(3) At the same time, it is pointed out that there are peculiar forms of expression, which are found in both divisions of the Book, as for example vii. 14 with ix. 8, and iii. 4 with xiii. 2, where the Hebrew forms amount to what may be regarded as characteristic phrases.

2. To the objections connected with points of history and chronology counter-arguments have been opposed by the advocates of the integrity of the Book.

(1) The re-building of the Temple, it has been said, which was the immediate object of Zechariah's earlier prophecies, had long been accomplished when the prophetic Spirit moved him to his later utterances. There was no risk, therefore, of his discouraging his countrymen from doing that which was done already. Not now to urge them to the finished task of former years, but to unfold before them and the Church of God, for instruction, for warning and for comfort, the future to which the accomplishment of that task would lead, was the prophet called. Nor are there wanting, as it has further been pointed out, predictions of the same future, of the same Messianic times and events, in the earlier chapters of this Book. Its two parts are not conflicting and contradictory, but successive and complementary oracles.

So again, it has been argued that the reference to the whole nation, as restored to their own land and to the favour of Almighty God, is common to both divisions of the Book; while the identification of the picture in xi. 8 with the period after the death of Jeroboam II. has rightly been held to be exceedingly precarious.

(2) As regards historical allusions to other nations and the conclusions to be drawn from them, it has in like manner been shewn, that the historical position of the writer of the last six chapters of Zechariah is not inconsistent, so far as internal evidence is concerned, with a post-exile date. Indeed that is the date which, as some have thought, may on that evidence be most satisfactorily assigned to him.

It has further been urged as a weighty argument on this side of the controversy, that if some things in these later chapters

seem to favour an earlier date for their author, his evident familiarity with the writings of the prophets of the period of the exile is in itself a sufficient and conclusive proof, that he did not live before them.

It may be said then generally, from this brief summary, that if the objections against the unity of the Book are neither few nor frivolous, the counter-considerations by which they have been met are of at least equal weight. If, for example, the difference of style between the first eight and the remaining six chapters of the Book, which is certainly remarkable, and which no competent scholar will venture to deny, has been urged in proof of the different authorship of the two portions, the fact, which is no less incontrovertible, that the style of the same writer is wont to vary greatly with his subject, may be insisted upon with much reason as a countervailing argument. A writer whose narrative style was comparatively tame and prosaic, in relating visions which he had seen, or events in which he had taken part, might well be expected, without losing his identity, to rise to far higher conceptions and more eloquent utterances when a distant and glorious future was unfolded before him. Examples of such a change of style are common both in sacred and secular literature. If, again, the historical allusions of the later chapters are thought to be inconsistent with the date, which the writer of the earlier chapters assigns to his own prophecies, it must not be forgotten, that a reasonable explanation of those allusions can be given on the supposition of the unity of the Book, and that the whole force of this argument has, in one noteworthy instance at least, been neutralized by a single weighty consideration on the opposite side. "The manifest acquaintance on the part of the writer of Zech. ix.—xiv., with so many of the later prophets seemed so convincing to De Wette that, after having in the first three editions of his *Introduction* declared for two authors, he found himself compelled to change his mind, and to admit that the later chapters must belong to the age of Zechariah, and might have been written by Zechariah himself." *Dict. of Bible.*

The conclusion, therefore, at which it seems not unreasonable to arrive is, that while we hold ourselves open to give candid

consideration to any fresh arguments that may be adduced, or evidence that may be offered, we have not as yet sufficient ground for relinquishing the ancient and tenable belief, that the Book of Zechariah is not only an integral part of the Word of God and of the inspired prophecy of the Old Testament, but is also throughout the work of the author whose name it bears.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK.

The Book of Zechariah falls, as has been said, into two principal parts, very dissimilar in style and in the form and vehicle chosen to convey their teaching; yet really combining in one harmonious whole, and containing a continuous revelation of the purposes of God and the future of His Church.

It will be sufficient to give here a general outline of the contents of the Book. A more detailed analysis of the several parts will be found at the commencement of each section in the following Commentary.

Part I. chaps. i.—viii.

I. *Introduction to the whole Book*, i. 1—6, consisting of

1. Title and author's name, ver. 1;

2. Call to repentance, as a necessary preliminary to the bright future afterwards unfolded, ver. 2—6.

II. *A series of eight visions*, with accompanying interpretations, seen by the prophet on the same night, which, like dissolving views, melt each into another, and so gradually open up the whole prospect, i. 7—vi. 8.

1. A band of horsemen in a myrtle grove first meet the prophet's view. They have traversed the whole earth, and report a state of universal repose, without a sign of that shaking of the nations which is to bring deliverance to Israel. But the discouraging sentence of the vision, which was but the echo of the despondency of the prophet and his people, as they looked on

the actual condition of all around them, is immediately reversed by a promise, addressed to faith, that all adverse appearances notwithstanding, the Temple shall be completed and Jerusalem and the cities of Judah be rebuilt and prosper, i. 7—17.

2. The promise, of which the terms are so far merely general, is now expanded more particularly. Four great horns, representing the world powers that had oppressed the Jews, appear on the scene, and are presently destroyed by four artificers, who come forth against them, i. 18—21.

3. The way being thus cleared by the destruction of the enemies of Judah, the next vision reveals the rebuilding of Jerusalem. A man with a measuring line comes upon the stage. But, as he is about to mark out the ground-plan of the city, he is stopped by an intimation that the Jerusalem of the future shall neither admit of walls, because of its overflowing population, nor require them, inasmuch as Jehovah Himself will be a wall of fire about her. In jubilant strain, as the vision swells far beyond the immediate future, her children are called upon to return, and the nations of the earth are invited to join themselves to Jehovah in Zion, ii. 1—13.

4. In the next two visions, the restoration of the Temple and its service is depicted. Joshua, the High-Priest, is seen in the first of them, clothed in the sordid garments of a criminal and arraigned at the judgment-seat by a stern accuser. But he is acquitted by the interposition of the Angel of Jehovah, and, arrayed in the goodly raiment of innocence, receives his commission to minister before God. His office, he is assured, is typical of a greater Priest to come, and, as a pledge of His coming and a preparation for it, Almighty God makes the completion of the Temple His own peculiar care, iii. 1—10.

5. The golden candlestick of the Tabernacle is next seen, its seven lamps fed by two olive trees, one on either side of it, denoting mysterious agencies, by which the grace of God is conveyed to His Church. On that grace the vision encourages Zerubbabel to rely, for by virtue of it he shall see his work accomplished, and the golden lamps shedding forth their light in the completed Temple, iv. 1—14.

6. Passing now to the cleansing and sanctifying of the people and the land, the prophetic scenery first assumes the form of a vast expanded roll, flying rapidly through the air to denote the swiftness with which its mission shall be executed. It bears inscribed on it the curse, which shall descend upon the house of the sinner, and consume it together with its owner, v. 1—4.

7. To this vision succeeds another, in which a woman, in whom the wickedness of the land is personified, is pressed down into a great ephah, or measure, and carried, fast shut up in it, by swift ministers, into the land of Babylon, the proper home of all iniquity, v. 5—11.

8. The visions close with a remarkable scene, in which four chariots issue from the valley between two brazen mountains, and speed forth, as the messengers of Jehovah's wrath, till His judgments are executed upon the nations of the earth, and His anger is pacified, vi. 1—8.

Resting, thus, on the then present circumstances of the Jews, as its historical basis, the prophecy of these visions deals chiefly with the immediate future—the re-building of the Temple and city, the re-peopling of the land, the restoration of the Temple-service, the purifying of the nation; while at the same time, both by the pregnant terms of its predictions in all these particulars, and by the vistas which from time to time it opens up in its course, it reaches forth unmistakably towards a more distant goal.

III. *A symbolical action*, vi. 9—15, which forms the next section of this part of the Book, and which, though without date, may be supposed to have followed closely upon the visions, is a fitting sequel to them in its prophetical character. A deputation had arrived at Jerusalem, bringing offerings towards the completion of the Temple, from Jews who still remained in the land of their captivity. Out of the silver and gold which they brought the prophet is directed to make crowns, and first place them on the head of Joshua, the High-priest, and then hang them up for a memorial in the Temple. By this significant action it was intimated that the Temple then in progress, in which those crowns were hung, should be finished and adorned in the coming

time with gifts and offerings; but also that another Priest should in due course arise, who should be a King as well, and who in a truer and higher sense should build the Temple of Jehovah.

IV. *Answer as to observance of Fasts*, chaps. vii., viii. After a silence of some two years, the prophet again speaks, and his prediction moves on substantially the same lines as those which have gone before, though it is cast in a different mould. The question had not unnaturally been agitated among the returned captives, whether they ought still to observe the national fasts, which had been instituted in connection with the leading incidents in the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. On the one hand, it seemed that the restoration already commenced put an end to these observances. On the other hand, the still feeble condition and doubtful fortunes of their church and nation might be construed into a call to continued fasting and humiliation before God. In the dilemma thus created, they seek and obtain an authoritative decision through the prophet. "In language worthy of his position and his office, language which reminds us of one of the most striking passages of his great predecessor (Is. lviii. 5—7), he lays down the same principle that God loves mercy rather than fasting, and truth and righteousness rather than sackcloth and a sad countenance. If they had perished, he reminds them it was because their hearts were hard while they fasted; if they would dwell safely, they must abstain from fraud and violence and not from food (vii. 4—14)." *Dict. of Bible.* To urge them to this he draws again, in chapter viii., a glowing picture of Jerusalem, the habitation of Jehovah, the city of truth and holiness, old men venerable with age moving along its streets, children making its thoroughfares resound with their mirth and pastimes, plenty and prosperity crowning their land. Then shall all fasts, he assures them, be turned into festivals, and all nations worship the God of Israel and esteem it an honour to be associated with a Jew.

Part II., chaps. ix.—xiv.

After a lapse, it may be, of many years (for there is no date to this second division of the Book), when, perhaps, the active

work of a long life was done, Zechariah is again called to prophesy. The event, which was the immediate subject of his earlier prophecies, had now become an accomplished fact. The Temple was restored and its worship resumed. "Moved by the Holy Ghost" (*φερόμενος ὑπὸ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου*), he soars now into loftier regions of prophetic inspiration, and in two "burdens of the word of the Lord," depicts in glowing language and vivid imagery the nearer and more distant future as they expand before him.

I. *The First Burden*, chaps. ix.—xi.

He, who had been foretold in the earlier prophecies of the Book as the Branch or Shoot, and who was to be a King as well as a Priest (iii. 8; vi. 12, 13), is the central figure of both sections of this Burden.

1. The first section, *The Coming of the King*, chaps. ix., x., describes His advent as King to Zion, and its consequences. The section opens with a prophecy of the destruction of the immediately surrounding nations by Alexander, and the preservation of the Jews at the time of his invasion, ix. 1—8. Then to Zion, thus and for this very end preserved, her King comes in lowly majesty, to inaugurate a peaceful rule over her children, united again into one people, and over the heathen nations of the world; to set free the captives of Israel, overthrow their enemies, and raise them to the height of honour and prosperity, 9—17. Pausing for a moment, to remind his countrymen that these and all good things must be looked for from the God of Israel, and not from the false gods and diviners, their recourse to whom had been the cause of all their troubles, x. 1, 2, the prophet resumes his theme. The bad rulers, who for their sins had been set over them, shall make way for worthy leaders in every department of the state. Victory is again promised them, and the scattered ten tribes, they are assured, shall be gathered from all parts of the world to their ancient dwelling-place and their fathers' God, x. 3—12.

2. The second section of this Burden, *The Rejection of the Shepherd*, chap. xi., foretells the treatment, in His character of

Shepherd, of the King whose coming and its results the first section had described. The order, however, of the former section is reversed. This section opens with a graphic picture of the consequences of the events which it afterwards records. On the stately forests of Lebanon and the giant oaks of Bashan the storm of wrath descends, and visits in its onward course the lowlands of Jordan and the south, xi. 1—3. It has come to avenge the insulting rejection by His people of Jehovah's Shepherd, whom the prophet is directed to personate. He describes his assumption of the typical office, his efforts to discharge it faithfully, his failure and consequent resignation of it in disgust, and the contumely which his demand for his wages, in token of his complete discharge from it, brought upon him, xi. 4—14. The section terminates with a prediction of the cruel and disastrous rule of a foolish shepherd, whom again the prophet personates, who shall be set over the people as a punishment for their rejection of the Good Shepherd, but who himself in turn shall be miserably destroyed, xi. 15—17.

II. *The Second Burden*, chaps. xii.—xiv.

This Burden, like the First, has two sections, both of them concerned with events which are almost exclusively still future.

1. *The first section*, xii. 1—xiii. 6, depicts the hostile gathering of all nations against Jerusalem, and their overthrow by the intervention of Jehovah, and by the prowess of His people, strengthened and inspirited by Him, xii. 1—9. The deliverance thus vouchsafed to them shall be followed, so the prophet intimates, by a national repentance and by deep and bitter sorrow and humiliation, on account of their past ingratitude and injury to God their great Benefactor, xii. 10—14. And this their penitence shall result in purification from past defilement, and in future amendment and utter abhorrence and putting away of evil, xiii. 1—6.

2. *The second section*, xiii. 7—xiv. 21, recurring to an earlier period than that with which the first section is mainly occupied, goes beyond it at its close into a more distant future, and reaches finally the times of the end. Its starting point is the smiting of Jehovah's Shepherd, whose rejection the First Burden had

recorded. A few pregnant sentences, involving the history of ages, suffice to describe the consequences of the smiting—the scattering of the sheep, the destruction of most of them, the severe but salutary discipline and ultimate restoration of the remainder, xiii. 7—9. Then the scene suddenly changes. Once again the city, which in the fact of the present and the assured promise of the future had filled already so large a place in the prophet's contemplation, on which he had looked with his bodily eyes, a shapeless mass of ruins; which he had seen in the far-reaching vision of an inspired seer, now beleaguered by hostile forces, and now peaceful and prosperous, safe and happy in the protection of Jehovah, rises before him. The city is already in the hands of its captors. They are dividing its spoil in the midst of its streets. Fierce warriors, of every nation under heaven, are filling it with slaughter and rapine, and leading forth its children into captivity. But Jehovah Himself becomes, as in the days of old, the champion of His people. He appears suddenly on the scene in person, attended by His holy ones, and with the accompaniment of great physical convulsions, to effect their deliverance. The discomfiture of their enemies is complete and final, xiv. 1—7. The conformation of the land is now changed. Its rugged and mountainous character ceases. It becomes a vast plain, out of which Jerusalem rises proudly on high as the metropolis of the country, Jehovah Himself dwelling in her as King, xiv. 8—11. Going back again to the destruction of her enemies, out of which this prosperity had arisen, the prophet depicts the terrible plagues by which they shall be consumed, xiv. 12—15, and the homage which the survivors shall be compelled under heavy penalties to pay, xiv. 16—19. The Book closes with a brief but striking description of the holiness which shall prevail, as the great climax of all. No distinction of secular and sacred shall any more exist. All things shall be alike sacred. The instruments of human pomp and pride, the commonest objects of daily life, shall be consecrated to the service of God. HOLINESS TO THE LORD shall, when that day comes, be inscribed on all, xiv. 20, 21.

"Lo, thus the hearts of all righteous in the Old Testament from Adam unto Christ, even 3974 years, have stood only upon Christ: in Him was their comfort, upon Him they trusted, it was He whom they longed for, and in Christ Jesu were they saved. Therefore hath our Christian faith endured since the beginning of the world, and is, and continueth still the only true, old, undoubted, and fast grounded faith."

BISHOP MYLES COVERDALE.

"This gift of expounding and interpreting the Scriptures was, in St Paul's time, given to many by special miracle, without study: so was also, by like miracle, the gift to speak with strange tongues, which they had never learned. But now, miracles ceasing, men must attain to the knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, &c. by travail and study, God giving the increase. So must men also attain by like means to the gift of expounding and interpreting the Scriptures."

ARCHBISHOP GRINDAL.

ZECHARIAH.

1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

CHAP. I. 1—6. INTRODUCTORY CALL TO REPENTANCE.

1. THE AUTHOR AND DATE OF HIS FIRST PROPHECY.

the eighth month, in the second year of Darius] The Jews after the Captivity substituted for the years of the reigns of their own kings, by which they had been accustomed to date their history, those of the foreign kings to whom they were subject. But they retained their own months, though with altered names. The eighth month had before been called Bul (1 Kings vi. 38). No name is given to it in the Bible after the return, but we learn from the Talmud and from Josephus that it was called Marcheshvan. This name has been supposed to be "a purely Hebrew term," and to signify "wet" or "rainy." The month coincides with our November and with the rainy season in Palestine. See *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. Month.

Haggai's first prophecy had been delivered in the sixth month, and his second prophecy in the seventh month of this same year. (Hag. i. 1, ii. 1.)

the son of Berechiah] called elsewhere, the son of Iddo. Ezra v. 1; Nehem. xii. 16. See Introd. to Zech. Chap. 1. p. 47.

2—6. THE CALL TO REPENTANCE. Zechariah's first message is one of warning, by the example of their fathers and the earlier prophets. On their fathers, as they well knew, the displeasure of Almighty God had fallen heavily (ver. 2). Now, for the first time in this new era of their history, God is sending to them, as He did to their fathers of old, His servants the prophets, himself and Haggai, with a call to repentance and a promise of reconciliation, ver. 3. Let them not be like their fathers, who turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the prophets and refused to amend, ver. 4; lest, being like them in their sin, they should be like them in their punishment also, and should have with them to confess, in the bitter experience of their accomplishment, that God's unheeded threatenings would surely take effect, ver. 5, 6.

2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.
3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts,
And I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.
4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying,
Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings:

2. *sore displeased*] Lit. **displeased with displeasure.** The addition of the noun serves to give emphasis to the verb. Comp. Luke xxii. 15. What a commentary on this "sore displeasure" was the scene on which the prophet and his hearers gazed, in its contrast with the past: the House, which had once been "exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries" (1 Chron. xxii. 5), now slowly rising above its foundations, the poor and feeble representative of its former self: the city, which had once been "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," now such as Nehemiah some seventy-five years after saw it, on that memorable night when he "on his mule or ass, accompanied by a few followers on foot, descended into the ravine of Hinnom, and threaded his way in and out amongst the gigantic masses of ruin and rubbish...; the gate, outside of which lay the piles of the sweepings and offscourings of the streets; the masses of fallen masonry, extending as it would seem all along the western and northern side; the blackened gaps left where the gates had been destroyed by fire; till at last by the royal reservoir the accumulations became so impassable, that the animal on which he rode refused to proceed" (Stanley, *Jewish Church*, Vol. III. p. 125, Neh. ii. 12—15): the people, once "many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry" (1 Kings iv. 20), now scattered among the heathen, represented on their native soil only by the poor and subject "remnant," to whom the prophet addressed himself!

3. *saith the Lord of hosts*] See note on Hag. ii. 6. In this verse the phrase occurs three times. The first and third times it is literally, "saith Jehovah of hosts." But the second time there is a variation in the Hebrew and it is properly "(it is the) utterance, or oracle of Jehovah of hosts." The same interchange of the two forms of expression is found in Hag. i. 8, 9, ii. 6—9.

4. *the former prophets have cried*] Rather, **cried**, as R.V. The reference is not to any one particular prophet or prophets, in whose writings words similar to these may be found; but to the whole body of prophets, who had preceded Zechariah and Haggai, and of whose message in the discharge of the didactic, as distinguished from the predictive function of their office, the substance is here given. Comp. Jerem. vii. 25, 26.

now] i. e. **I pray.**

But they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.
Your fathers, where *are* they? 5
And the prophets, do they live for ever?
But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my 6
servants the prophets,
Did they not take hold of your fathers?
And they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us,
According to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

unto me] whose word, and not their own, the prophets spoke. Comp. Luke x. 16.

5, 6. The lesson conveyed by these two verses, which must be taken together, is the same as that contained in the words of Isaiah (xl. 6, 8), "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field...The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." There, however, the lesson has reference to God's word of promise, for comfort (comp. 1 Peter i. 24, 25). Here it has reference to His word of threatening, for warning.

6. *my statutes*] or **decrees**. The word may be used here, as it is in Zeph. ii. 2; Ps. ii. 7 (in both which places it is rendered *decree* in A. V.), of some punishment, which God had purposed or decreed, and threatened by His prophets to send upon them unless they repented. But it may also be taken to refer, as it commonly does in the O. T., to the "statutes" of the Law, sanctioned by rewards and punishments, which it was the office of the prophet to repeat and enforce.

take hold of] Marg. and R.V. **overtake**. Comp. Deut. xxviii. 15, 45, where the same word is used. Pusey quotes the well-known words of Horace, "Rarely hath punishment with limping tread parted with the forerunning miscreant."

returned] Rather **turned**, as the word is rendered in ver. 3, 4. They were brought at last to do, what before they had refused to do, ver. 4, and what you are now intreated to be wise in time to do, ver. 3, to turn from sin and turn to God.

thought to do] Comp. Lam. ii. 17, where the penitent confession is uttered by Jeremiah, as the representative of the people, almost in the words here recorded: "The Lord hath done that which he had devised (the same word as is here rendered, "thought"); he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old."

dealt with us] Lit. **done with us**. As He thought, or purposed, to do, so hath He done.

THE VISIONS. i. 7—vi. 15. Exactly five months had now elapsed since the building of the Temple was resumed, as the fruit of Haggai's earnest expostulation (Hag. i. 14, 15). It was three months since Zechariah had uttered the call to repentance with which his Book opens

7 Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which *is* the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of

(i. 1); and in the mean time Haggai had again spoken in the name of the Lord, in his concluding prophecies (Hag. ii. 10—24). On the basis of the repentance, of which the people were giving practical proof in their honest endeavours to rebuild the Temple, and as an encouragement to them to persevere in the work, Zechariah now unfolds to them God's purposes of mercy, as they had been unfolded to him in a series of eight visions, all of which had been vouchsafed to him, as it would seem, in a single night.

7. *the month Sebat*] or *Shebat*, R.V. i.e. January or February. The identification of the Jewish months with our own cannot be effected with precision, on account of the variations that must inevitably exist between the lunar and the solar months. See Gen. Introd., Chap. II. p. 18.

the word of the Lord] The visions themselves might not improperly be called, "the word of the Lord," inasmuch as they are the medium of communication between the Divine mind and the minds of the prophet and the people. But they are accompanied not only by the spoken explanation of the angel, but by frequent passages introduced by the expression, "thus saith the Lord" (i. 14, 16, 17, ii. 5, 8, &c.), so that the revelation as a whole may fitly be described as "the word of the Lord."

THE FIRST VISION. *The horsemen among the myrtle-trees.* i. **8—17.** In the night time, in prophetic trance or vision, Zechariah sees, in a shady valley full of myrtle trees, a man (who is also called an angel of Jehovah and, as it would seem, Jehovah Himself) seated on a red horse, and behind him a number of other horsemen on horses of three different colours, ver. 8. Wishing to know the meaning of what he sees, the prophet turns for information to an angel beside him, whose office it is to interpret to him the visions, and who remains by him for that purpose throughout the entire series, ver. 9. In answer to a sign made, or an enquiry addressed to him, by this interpreting angel, the man or angel on horseback among the myrtles explains what the mission of the band of horsemen had been, and gathers from them by sign or interrogation the result of that mission, ver. 10, 11. Sympathising with the prophet and his people, in the disappointment which the report of the horsemen would produce—for it told that the promised tokens of returning favour to Zion were not yet apparent, the leading horseman, the Angel of Jehovah, intercedes with the Almighty on their behalf, ver. 12. And in the name of Jehovah he gives, as the fruit of his intercession, an answer of encouragement to the interpreting angel at the prophet's side, ver. 13; who in turn puts into the mouth of Zechariah the message of Jehovah, which he bids him proclaim to the people, that despite the world-wide peace, which that stationary group in the still night amidst the secluded myrtle-grove at once symbolize and announce, He will speedily arise to take vengeance on their enemies, ver. 14, 17, and that

Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, I saw by 8
night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he
stood among the myrtle trees that *were* in the bottom; and

then the Temple shall be completed, Jerusalem rebuilt, and the land at large become inhabited and prosperous, ver. 16, 17.

8. *by night*] or, *in the night*, R.V. As the Jewish day began at sunset, this would be the night preceding the twenty-fourth day of the month. If so, Zechariah may have recited these visions to the people for their encouragement, on the very day on which, five months before, they had re-commenced their work on the Temple. Haggai i. 14, 15.

a man riding upon a red horse] There is some difficulty in deciding how many persons take part in this vision. If, however, we suppose them to have been

1. The prophet;
2. The company of horsemen and their Leader;
3. The interpreting angel;

a clear and satisfactory idea of the vision is obtained. The man riding upon a red horse, the Leader of the company of horsemen, appears again in ver. 10, where the circumstance of his "standing among the myrtle-trees" is repeated, in order to identify him with the horseman of ver. 8. In ver. 11 he is called "the Angel of the Lord;" but to make it clear that he is the same person who was previously described as "a man," his "standing among the myrtle trees" is again mentioned. Having thus been defined as the angel of the Lord (and he is the only person throughout the vision to whom that name is given) he is referred to in the next verse, ver. 12, by that title only, there being no further need to mention the circumstance of his standing among the myrtle trees, which was only introduced for the purpose of identifying him with the "man" of ver. 8, 10. In ver. 13 he who is "a man" in ver. 8, and "the Angel of Jehovah" in ver. 11, 12, becomes perhaps (see note on that verse) "Jehovah" Himself. If this view be adopted, then only one other angel appears upon the scene, "the angel that talked or communed with me" (ver. 9, 13, 14), who on this supposition stands, as it were, outside in this as he does in all the subsequent visions, and is only employed to interpret them to the prophet.

the myrtles] The myrtle is said to be indigenous to Palestine. That it abounded in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem at this period of Jewish history we learn incidentally, from the description of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was held under Ezra and Nehemiah. "Go forth," so the proclamation ran, "unto the mount, and fetch olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written." Nehem. viii. 15.

in the bottom] i.e. the low, deep valley, which appears to have been the favourite *habitat* of the myrtle. Comp. "litora myrtetis lætissima," "amantes litora myrtos." Virgil, Georg. II. 112, IV. 124. Here it may well have been the valley of the Kedron. Others render, but with less probability, "the shady (place)." The idea that the "tabernacle" or dwelling-place of God is intended has nothing to recommend it.

behind him *were there* red horses, speckled, and white.
9 Then said I, O my lord, what *are* these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what

red horses, speckled, and white] With respect to the first and last of the colours, "red," i. e. bay or chestnut, and "white," there is no doubt. What exactly the intermediate colour is, "speckled," or "bay" (margin), "sorrel," R.V., must remain uncertain. Much ingenuity has been expended in endeavouring to give a meaning to the various colours of the horses. But inasmuch as the horsemen have been on the same mission, ver. 10, and all bring back the same report, ver. 11, and no reference is made to the colour of their horses by the angel who interprets the vision, it may fairly be regarded as a detail, to which no special importance is to be attached. We may say with Calvin (and it is a remark of general application to the visions and parables both of the Old Testament and of the New), "Si contenti simus mediocritate, nihil hic erit adeo perplexum, quin saltem facile sit summam totius vaticinii colligere. Sed multum nocuit curiositas interpretum, qui dum excutiunt singulas syllabas, pueriliter ludunt in multis." His own view is, that the obscurity in which the vision is shrouded, the dark night, the low valley, the sombre myrtles, is intended to remind the prophet that God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out, while the angel riders are a help to his human weakness to understand how, like a king whose couriers are continually passing to and fro throughout his dominions, the Almighty is intimately acquainted with all that is done upon earth, and the different coloured horses picture to his mind the truth, that all human events, whatever be their complexion, are alike under the cognisance and control of the never-failing Providence, which ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; and we may add, however diverse they appear, are all working harmoniously to accomplish His will.

9. *O my lord*] This question is addressed to the interpreting angel, of whose presence we are for the first time made aware by the fact that he replies to it.

the angel that talked with me] This is the title by which this angel is distinguished throughout the visions: i. 13, 14 (where the A. V. has "*communed* with me"), 19, ii. 3, iv. 1, 4, 5, v. 10, vi. 4. The phrase has been variously interpreted. Some would render "*in* me," "in that that angel formed in the spirit and imaginative power of Zechariah phantasms or images of things which were foreshown him, and gave him to understand what those images signified." Others take it to mean "*by* me," "the prophet being the channel through whom the divine revelations were made." But there is no reason to depart from the rendering of the A. V., which accurately describes the office of the angel as actually discharged by him in explaining the visions, and which is supported by Hebrew usage. Comp. Numb. xii. 8, where it is difficult to understand how God should speak "face to face," either "in," or "by," a man.

these *be*. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees 10
answered and said, These *are they* whom the LORD hath
sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they 11
answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the
myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through
the earth, and behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at
rest. Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, 12
O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on
Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, *against* which thou
hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And 13
the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with*

10. *the man*] i. e. the rider on the red horse of ver. 8, who, in answer it may be to a look or sign from the interpreting angel, takes upon himself to "shew" the prophet "what these be."

11. *the angel of the Lord*] The man on the red horse, who as it now appears is an angel of Jehovah in human form, having told Zechariah, in ver. 10, what the other riders were, now turns to them and elicits from them, probably by sign or look, the fact for the prophet's information, that they had traversed the earth and found universal peace prevailing.

12. *answered*] The word does not necessarily mean replied to a question, but has here, as elsewhere, the more general signification of speaking in a manner corresponding, or "answering" to the circumstances described and the feelings called forth by them (comp. Job iii. 2 (margin); Daniel ii. 26; Acts v. 8). Pitying Zechariah and his countrymen in the disappointment, which the answer of the horsemen (ver. 11) could not fail to cause them, inasmuch as it told of rest and quiet, whereas the "shaking of all nations" was the predicted sign of returning favour to Zion (Hag. ii. 7, 21, 22), the Angel proceeds to speak "answerably" to this feeling, in the intercession which he now offers on their behalf. His sympathy and intercession make it probable, as Calvin remarks (though he offers the alternative of its being any angel you please), that this Angel of the Lord was "Christ the Mediator."

thèse threescore and ten years] Comp. Jerem. xxv. 11; Ezra i. 1. The meaning is: Why art Thou still angry with us, when the appointed time of our punishment, the seventy years of our captivity, has expired?

13. *the Lord*] i. e. Jehovah. This may either mean, that Almighty God answered from heaven the intercession of the Angel of the Lord (ver. 12), not to himself directly, but to the interpreting angel, by words which, whether he heard them himself or gathered their import from the angel's address to him (ver. 14), the prophet knew to be "good, even comfortable;" or the Angel of the Lord of ver. 12 may be here identified with Jehovah (comp. Gen. xviii. 1, 2, 13, 17, 22; Joshua v. 13, vi. 2), and represented as Himself communicating to the interpreting angel the answer, which He had received from heaven.

14 good words *and* comfortable words. So the angel that
communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying,
Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion *with* a great
jealousy.
15 And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are*
at ease:
For I was *but* a little displeased, and they helped forward
the affliction.
16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jeru-
salem with mercies:
My house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts,
And a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.
17 Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad;

14. *I am jealous*] "I have been, not now only, but in time past even when I did not shew it, and am jealous, with the tender love which allows not what it loves to be injured." Pusey. Comp. chap. viii. 2.

15. *heathen*] or, *nations*, R.V.

at ease] as described in ver. 11. The word in this verse is the same as in Is. xxxii. 9, 11, and Ps. cxxiii. 4.

helped forward] Comp. Is. xlvii. 6.

16. *Therefore*] because I am thus jealous for my people and angry with their enemies.

a line] i.e. a measuring line, to mark out the city with a view to its being rebuilt. Comp. Job xxxviii. 5. It had been measured before for destruction, 2 Kings xxi. 13; Lam. ii. 8.

17. *be spread abroad*] Some would render "overflow," comparing Prov. v. 16. But the more usual sense of the word, "spread abroad," or "disperse," gives a good meaning. Not only shall the Temple be rebuilt, and the metropolis restored, but cities, owned and blessed by God ("my cities"), shall be scattered throughout the land.

The scope, then, of the first vision is clear. It conveys a distinct promise and prophecy of three future events. "My house shall be built," ver. 16. This was accomplished four years later in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra vi. 15). "A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem," ver. 16. This was done some seventy years later, when the city was rebuilt by Nehemiah (Neh. vi. 15). "My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad," ver. 17. The fulfilment of this is to be found in the history of the Jews under the Asmonean princes. Beyond this the first prophecy does not expressly go; though its concluding words, "The Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem," are at least an implied promise of better things, than any which befell the Jews before the coming of Christ.

And the LORD shall yet comfort Zion,
And shall yet choose Jerusalem.

Then lift I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. 18
And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* 19
these? And he answered me, These *are* the horns which
have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the 20
LORD shewed me four carpenters. Then said I, What 21

THE SECOND VISION. *The four horns and the four workmen.* i. 18—21. (Heb., ii. 1—4.) The scene changes. The first vision had foretold as certain the punishment of the heathen, with which the prosperity of Israel was bound up. This vision takes a step in advance and depicts that punishment as already come. The prophet turns again to the field of view, which he had ceased to contemplate while he gave heed to the words of the interpreting angel, or pursued the thoughts which those words suggested. Looking up, he sees now before him four mighty horns. The beast, or beasts, which bear them are hidden from his view. The horns alone stand out from the surrounding gloom (ver. 18). In answer to the question, which he addresses to the interpreting angel, he is told that these horns represent the powers which have scattered his people (ver. 19). And now he sees, in the unfolding of this vision granted him by Jehovah, four artificers or smiths coming out to view, and proceeding one towards each of the four towering horns (ver. 20). In answer to a further question by the prophet, the interpreting angel tells him that these artificers are come to demolish and drive away these horns (ver. 21).

18. *four horns*] The horn is a symbol of honour (1 Sam. ii. 1; Job xvi. 15), and of power (Jer. xlviii. 25; Amos vi. 13). Here the latter idea is prominent. By the *four* horns some understand four definite powers or kingdoms, either, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Romans, in accordance with the visions of Daniel, chaps. ii. iv.; or, inasmuch as the horns are interpreted in ver. 19 to be powers which "have (already) scattered" Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon and Medo-Persia. But it is better to take the number four generally of enemies on every side, or towards every point of the compass.

19. *Judah, Israel and Jerusalem*] The two tribes, the ten tribes, and the capital of the whole nation. So inclusive a description must be held to refer to the whole Jewish people, so that the vision predicts the overthrow of the oppressors of Israel as well as of Judah.

20. *the Lord*] Jehovah, from whom the whole series of visions proceeded, ver. 7.

four carpenters] Rather, **artificers**, or **workmen**; (*smiths*, R. V.). The word is used of working in wood, but also in metals and in stone. Isaiah xliv. 12, 13; 2 Samuel v. 11. There is no ground for the idea that these artificers represent angelic ministries. They rather indicate generally the various human agencies, corresponding in number and variety to the enemies of Israel, by the instrumentality of which those

come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lift up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

2 I lift up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold, a man
2 with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither

enemies should be overthrown. "Comparat gentes, quæ infestæ fuerant Judæis, cornibus: postea comparet fabris alios hostes, quorum manu et opera utitur Deus ad frangendos conatus eorum omnium, qui molesti erunt ecclesiæ." Calvin.

21. *he spake*] i.e. the interpreting angel.

have scattered] Rather, **scattered**, R.V.

to fray them] Either the wild animals bearing the horns, or more probably the nations symbolised by them, are here spoken of as being "frayed," or "panic-stricken." In the following word, "to cast out," the figure of the horns is perhaps resumed.

THE THIRD VISION. *The man with the measuring line.* ii. 1—13. (Heb., ii. 5—17.) The vision which describes the destruction of her enemies is followed by another, in which the consequent growth and prosperity of Jerusalem are depicted, and which in the largeness of its predictions extends into the more distant future. The prophet sees now upon the stage, or field of view, a young man with a measuring line in his hand, ver. 1. He asks him where he is going, and is answered, that he is going to measure Jerusalem, ver. 2. Upon this, the interpreting angel quits the prophet's side and "goes forth" upon the stage in pursuit, as it would seem, of the man with the measuring line, to bid him desist from his purpose. As he does so, he is met by another angel, to whom he delegates the errand on which he himself had started, and whom he commissions in the hearing of the prophet (thus fulfilling his office as "interpreter" of the visions, and removing the false impression which the man's answer, ver. 2, had created) to go and bid the "young man" cease from measuring, because Jerusalem, in its coming populousness and security, should neither admit of nor require walls, ver. 3—5. The exiles still remaining in Babylon are now summoned to leave her, ver. 6, 7, for God's judgments are about to fall upon her, ver. 8, 9; whereas in Zion, to which they are invited to return, He will dwell, ver. 10, 11, making it again His portion and His choice, ver. 12, extending its blessings to the Gentiles, ver. 11, confirming by the happy event the truth of this prediction, ver. 9, 11, and manifesting Himself as the Judge of all the earth, ver. 13.

CH. II.—1. *a man*] Probably an angel in human form, called a "young man," ver. 4, where see note.

a measuring line] The word is not the same as in i. 16; but the promise there is taken up here, and its literal fulfilment, which the action of the man with the line seemed about to secure, is merged in a

goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem,
to see what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length
thereof. And behold, the angel that talked with me went 3
forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said 4
unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying,
Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls
For the multitude of men and cattle therein:
For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire 5
round about,
And will be the glory in the midst of her.

greater blessing. In Ezek. xl. 3, Rev. xi. 1, xxi. 15, a reed is used, in addition to, or instead of, a line as here.

3. *went forth*] from the place where he was standing beside me. Comp. Is. xxvi. 21.

went out] Rather, **went forth**, the Hebrew word being the same as before. This second angel is seen going forth from the opposite side of the stage on which the vision appears, to meet the interpreting angel as he went forth.

4. *and said unto him*] Rather, **and he said unto him**; i.e. the interpreting angel said to the second angel whom he met. That he might remain himself near the prophet, whose interpreter he was appointed to be throughout the whole series of visions, he sent his brother angel instead of going himself in pursuit of the man with the measuring line, who by this time had passed on his errand out of the field of view, giving him a message for him in the hearing of the prophet, and so discharging his interpreting function, so far as this vision is concerned.

this young man] Some commentators refer this to Zechariah himself, and understand it to be the second angel in ver. 3, who meeting the interpreting angel bids him run back to the prophet with the announcement that follows. It is difficult, however, to see why on this view the angel should be told to "run;" whereas on the view taken above the messenger is directed to hasten after one who has already started on his errand, and the scenic character of the vision is altogether better maintained.

as towns without walls] as open, unwalled country villages. The word is rendered, "unwalled villages," Ezek. xxxviii. 11, and is there explained to be places where men are "at rest and dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates." Comp. Deut. iii. 5; Esther ix. 19. The prophecy of this and the next verse, however it may include, yet far exceeds the rebuilding of the walls by Nehemiah, or any prosperity and extension into suburbs of Jerusalem, that has yet taken place.

6—13. That they may share in the promised favour to Zion, but also (and this is put first and urgently, because the judgment was imminent) that they may escape the coming punishment of Babylon,

6 Ho, ho, *come forth*, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD:
For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD.
7 Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest *with* the daughter of Babylon.

the Jews still remaining there are called upon to return to their own country.

6. *Ho, ho, come forth and flee*] The words "come forth" are not in the Hebrew, and the R.V. omits them: *Ho, ho, flee.* Some would supply, "hear:" "Ho, ho (hear) and flee."

the land of the north] i.e. Babylonia. Comp. Jer. iii. 12, 18, xxiii. 8.

have spread you abroad] Some regard this as a promise of future extension, consequent upon obedience to the call to return from Babylon. But it is rather to be understood of their past dispersion, from which the command and the providence of God are now recalling them and saying, "flee from the land of the north, and from the four winds of the heaven, for thereunto have I scattered you." So God promises by Jeremiah that they should say, "The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, *and from all* countries whither I had driven them," xxiii. 8; and again, "I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth," xxxi. 8.

"*The north country*, although its capital and centre was Babylon, was the whole Babylonian empire, called 'the north' because its invasions always came upon Israel from the north. But the Book of Esther shews that sixty years after this the Jews were dispersed over the 127 provinces of the Persian empire, from India (the Punjaub) to Ethiopia (Esther i. 1; iii. 8, 12—14; viii. 5, 9); whether they were purposely placed by the policy of the conquerors in detached groups, as the ten tribes were in *the cities of the Medes*, or whether, when more trusted, they migrated of their own accord." Pusey.

the four winds] comp. Matt. xxiv. 31.

7. *Deliver thyself*] Lit. "**Ho, Zion, deliver thyself: thou that dwellest with**, &c." The reason for this urgent call to escape, viz. the impending judgment upon Babylon, follows immediately, ver. 8, 9. In like manner Jeremiah (l. 8, 10; li. 6, 45), and before him Isaiah (xlviii. 14, 20), connects the punishment of Babylon with the escape of Israel. The immediate reference of those prophecies is to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, which preceded and led to the return from the 70 years' captivity. But the prophecies reach on, in the largeness of their terms, to the final and utter destruction of Babylon, and include such later calls to escape as that of Zechariah here. The immediate reference here would appear to be to one or both of those occasions in the reign of Darius, on which Babylon "had risen against the Persians and made an effort to regain its independence". "What these dangers were may be seen from the great inscription of Darius cut into the rock

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; 8
After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you:
For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.
For behold, I *will* shake mine hand upon them, 9
And they shall be a spoil to their servants:
And ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: 10
For lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

at Behistun, and supposed by Sir H. Rawlinson to have been executed in the fifth year of the reign of Darius (two or three years after this prophecy was uttered). That inscription records two great rebellions in Babylonia, and two captures of the city of Babylon, one effected by Darius in person, the other by one of his generals. The Jews in Babylon who did not listen to the prophetic warning suffered no doubt severely in the confusions of that period; while those who returned to Palestine, and obeyed the command to flee out of Babylon, delivered their souls, that is their lives, and were not cut off in her iniquity." Rev. C. H. H. Wright, *Bampton Lectures*, 1878.

8. *after the glory*] rather, **after glory.** There is no article to shew that there is a reference, as has been supposed, to ver. 5, so that it would mean, "after the glory which I have promised has come upon Israel," &c. The more probable meaning therefore is, "after," i.e. in pursuit, or in prosecution of glory; to get the glory, to manifest My glory, in their punishment for having spoiled My people, and so touched Me in the apple of Mine eye.

hath he sent me] "hath He (Jehovah, the speaker) sent me (the agent commissioned)." We should have expected, "have I sent thee," and, "of my eye," at the end of the verse, especially as the actual words of Jehovah follow in the next verse. But such changes of person are not uncommon in Hebrew.

the apple of his eye] lit. "the cavity or gate of his eye." Comp. Deut. xxxii. 10; Ps. xvii. 8, where however the Heb. word is different.

9. *shake mine hand*] Job xxxi. 21; Isaiah xix. 16.

a spoil to their servants] They "which spoiled you," ver. 8, shall be themselves "a spoil," and that to those whom they held in servitude, *those that served them* R. V.

hath sent me] The divine mission of the angel who foretells these things shall be attested by the event. Comp. ver. 11, iv. 9, vi. 15.

10. *I will dwell in the midst of thee*] This prophecy had a fulfilment, when the Temple was rebuilt and the worship of God was resumed on Mount Zion. But it had a higher fulfilment when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John i. 14. Malachi iii. 1), and the promise of the Gentiles being joined to the Lord, ver. 11, was also accom-

11 And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day,
And shall be my people:
And I will dwell in the midst of thee,
And thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.
12 And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land,
And shall choose Jerusalem again.
13 Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD:
For he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

plished. It awaits its highest fulfilment in both particulars in the times that are yet future. Rev. vii. 15; xxi. 3, 22—26.

11. *be joined*] *join themselves.* R. V.

12. *the holy land*] made so by God dwelling there. Comp. Ex. iii. 5.
again] *shall yet choose Jerusalem.* R. V.

13. *be silent*] Comp. Hab. ii. 20; Zeph. i. 7.
raised up] *waked up.* R. V.
his holy habitation] From heaven, "the habitation of His holiness" (Deut. xxvi. 15; Jerem. xxv. 30), where He had seemed to dwell, far off from the affairs of earth, Jehovah should arise, or awake, and come forth to judgment, to succour His people and discomfit His enemies. Let all flesh be hushed before Him in awful silence.

THE FOURTH VISION. *Joshua the High Priest before the Angel of Jehovah*, iii. 1—10. The former visions had foretold that the "rest" of the nations should be disturbed (i. 8—17), that the enemies of Israel should be "cast out" (i. 18—21), and that Jerusalem should become the habitation of Jehovah (ii. 1—13). But in order to the fulfilment of these promises, there must be a moral and spiritual reformation of the people. With this the next vision is concerned. Judgment begins at the house of God (comp. Mal. iii. 3). The prophet sees Joshua the High Priest, the representative not only of the whole priesthood, but also of the entire nation, standing before the Angel of the Lord. At his right hand stands the Adversary, to play an adversary's part against him (ver. 1). But before the charge can be preferred, Jehovah Himself interposes and rebukes the Adversary. Would the same hand, He asks, that had plucked from the fire the brand, charred, blackened and half-consumed already, cast it back again into the flames? And should He, who had delivered the remnant of His people from the furnace of Babylon, now listen to the charges of the accuser and yield them again to destruction? (ver. 2.) Doubtless, matter of accusation is not wanting. The very garb of Joshua testifies against him. Instead of the pure white linen in which the High Priest should have been arrayed, he is "clothed with filthy garments" (ver. 3). But this obstacle shall by an act of mere grace be removed. The angel attendants are commanded to take away his filthy garments; while their action is interpreted to him by the as-

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before 3
the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand
to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, 2

surance that his iniquity is put away, and the promise of pure raiment is given him (ver. 4). At the instance of the prophet, who would fain see God's High Priest arrayed in the complete attire of his office, a fair mitre is added. The angel of Jehovah stands by to seal by his presence and approval the transaction (ver. 5). Nor does he quit the scene till he has revealed to Joshua the full dignity of the priesthood to which he is now restored. As exercised by himself and his successors, it shall, while it moves in the ways of holy obedience in the restored Temple on earth, move also in spirit among the heavenly ministrations of angels (ver. 6, 7). But it shall furthermore, by virtue of its typical character, foreshadow and prepare the way for Him who, Himself its chief corner-stone, shall rear the true Temple on which the eyes of Jehovah are fixed (ver. 8, 9), who by one act shall remove iniquity for ever (ver. 9), and restore prosperity and festal joy to man (ver. 10).

CH. III.—**1.** *he shewed me*] i.e. Jehovah, from whom all the visions proceeded, i. 7, 20, shewed me. καὶ ἔδειξέ μοι κύριος, LXX.

Joshua] called in the Book of Ezra Jeshua (ii. 2; iii. 2, etc.). His grandfather, Seraiah, was taken captive by Nebuzar-adan after the sacking of the city and burning of the Temple, and was slain by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (2 Kings xxv. 18—21). Josedech, or Jehozadak, his son, the father of Joshua, was at the same time taken as a prisoner to Babylon (1 Chron. vi. 15), where Joshua probably was born. During the lifetime of Josedech, while the Temple was in ruins and the people in captivity, the High Priesthood was in abeyance. After an interval of about 52 years, Josedech being now dead, the office was revived in the person of his son. Joshua was the first of the third or last series of High Priests, those, namely, who came after the Captivity. He is spoken of with commendation in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xlix. 12; comp. 1 Esdr. v. 5, 48, 56), and is made a special type of the Great High Priest, both in this chapter and in chapter vi.

standing before the angel of the Lord] as before his judge, Deut. xix. 17; Joshua xx. 6; Rom. xiv. 10; Rev. xx. 12. The Angel of the Lord is here, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, He to whom all judgment is committed (John v. 22). See note on i. 12.

Satan standing at his right hand] The great Adversary (for Satan is here a proper name, as in Job i. 6—12; ii. 1—7) here assumes the character (Rev. xii. 10) and occupies the place (Psalm cix. 6) of the accuser in the trial. See Appendix, note B.

to resist him] Lit. **to play-the-adversary against him**; *to be his adversary*, R. V. The verb and the noun (Satan) have the same root. The charge against Joshua has been thought to be a personal one, and reference has been made to Ezra x. 18, to prove that some of his sons had polluted themselves by marrying strange wives. The passage in Ezra however, is at least 60 years later than the vision in Zechariah. It is better to regard the intended accusation as including both personal

The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan;
Even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee:
Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire?

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood
4 before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and *I will* clothe thee with

and official transgressions, his own sins and the sins of the people (Heb. v. 3; vii. 27). Sin, the sin of the man and of the order to which he belongs, of the individual and of the nation which he represents, stands in the way of the promised blessing, and must first be put away before that blessing can be enjoyed.

2. *The Lord*] Jehovah, who in ver. 1, 5, 6, is called the Angel of Jehovah.

hath chosen Jerusalem] comp. i. 17; ii. 12; and for the argument Romans viii. 33. The election or choice of God, as an act of free grace, is insisted on in like manner in the earlier history. Deut. iv. 37; vii. 7, 8; x. 15.

a brand pluckt out of the fire] i.e. saved from imminent and almost completed destruction, comp. 1 Cor. iii. 15. A similar expression occurs in Amos iv. 11. In Isaiah vii. 4, "from the two tails of these smoking brands," the same figure is used with a different reference. The two hostile kings are there compared to wooden stakes or pokers, which had been used to stir up the flames, but which were themselves now well-nigh burnt out and consumed, and need therefore cause no further apprehension.

3. *filthy garments*] There is no allusion to the Roman custom of accused persons wearing sordid attire at their trials (*reus sordidatus*, Liv. ii. 54, vi. 20). Nor is there any ground for the idea that "an accusation had been lodged against" Joshua "in the Persian Court;" and that "the splendid attire of the High Priest, studded with jewels, had been detained at Babylon, or, at least, could not be worn without the special permission of the king; and until the accusations had been cleared away this became still more impossible" (Stanley, after Ewald, *Jewish Church*, iii. 103). The promise of the vision is not that "the soiled and worn clothing of the suffering exile shall be replaced, by the old magnificence of Aaron and of Zadok;" but that in accordance with the constant imagery of Holy Scripture and with the express statement of ver. 4, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee," the guilt and pollution of sin shall be replaced by spotless purity and holiness (Lev. xvi. 4; Isaiah lxiv. 6; Rev. vii. 14; xix. 8).

4. *he*] i.e. the Angel of Jehovah.

those that stood before him] Angels of inferior order, who though not previously mentioned were in attendance, as was fitting, upon the Angel of the Lord. Compare for the expression Genesis xli. 46; Deut. i. 38; Daniel i. 5.

change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre 5
upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and
clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD
stood *by*. And the angel of the LORD protested unto 6
Joshua, saying,

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; 7
If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my
charge,
Then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep
my courts,
And I will give thee places to walk among these that
stand *by*.

change of raiment] The Hebrew word here used only occurs beside in Isaiah iii. 22, "changeable suits of apparel," where number and variety, frequent changing, rather than costliness or magnificence, though that of course may be implied, appears to be the subject of rebuke. So here a change of dress, not necessarily different in kind, but pure instead of being defiled, is promised. The R. V. however, renders *rich apparel* here, and *festival robes* in Isaiah.

5. *And I said*] The speaker might be the Angel of the Lord, reciting further the commands which he had given. But it is better to suppose that Zechariah, looking on with intense interest, gives vent to his feelings, in the request that the now comely attire of the High Priest should not be left incomplete.

mitre] The word is not the same (though from the same root) as that used in Exodus xxviii. 4, 36—38; but there is no doubt that the same thing is intended.

stood by] i.e. remained in the same position that he had occupied before, to superintend and sanction the proceedings.

6. *protested*] i.e. solemnly and earnestly affirmed. Comp. Gen. xliii. 3; Jer. xi. 7; where the same Hebrew word is used.

7. *judge my house*] This may mean "my people," Num. xii. 7; Hosea viii. 1; the Jewish Church being spoken of, like the Christian, as the house of God, 1 Tim. iii. 15. "Judgment, in the place of God, was part of the High Priest's office." (Pusey.) See Deut. xvii. 8—13. But it may be used in its more obvious and restricted sense (comp. "my courts," in the parallel clause) of the Temple with its priests and ministers.

places to walk] *a place of access*, R. V. text; meaning presumably of access to God. Thou shalt be admitted to the immediate presence and throne of God. There is no need, however, to depart from the rendering of A. V. and R. V. margin. Comp. Ezek. xlii. 4 for the word, and see next note.

among these that stand by] i.e. among the angels, who were still standing round the Angel of Jehovah, in attendance upon Him as He spoke, ver. 4. The courts and chambers of the material house,

8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou,
And thy fellows that sit before thee:
For they *are* men wondered at:
For behold, I *will* bring forth my servant the BRANCH.
9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua;

so the promise runs, shall be places where angels ever come and go. The obedient priest shall realise in his ministry their presence and their fellowship. The material and the sensible shall fade away as it were from his sight, lost in the higher glory of the spiritual and the heavenly. The promise directly refers to the ministry of Joshua and his fellows and successors *on earth;* even if it includes a pledge of a higher ministry after death: "In the resurrection of the dead I will raise thee to life, and give thee feet walking among these Seraphim." Targum. To one priest, we know, who walked in the ways and kept the charge of the Lord (Luke i. 6), the promise was literally fulfilled by the appearance of an angel to him in the Temple (ver. 11); and the readiness with which the people surmised what had happened (ver. 22) might seem to shew that his was not an altogether singular and unheard of experience.

8. *that sit before thee*] not, "who are now (seen) sitting," for Joshua, the High Priest, alone appears in the vision, but "who are accustomed to sit," as the inferior priests ("thy fellows") before the High Priest to receive his commands. So "the sons of the prophets" sit before Elisha for instruction, 2 Kings iv. 38; vi. 1; and "the elders of Israel" in like manner before Ezekiel, viii. 1; xiv. 1.

for they are men wondered at] Rather, **men of sign, or type**: *men which are a sign*, R. V. "Men who in their persons (and office) shadow forth future events. Ezek. xii. 6, 11; xxiv. 24, 27." Gesen. This clause is a quasi-parenthesis. The direct address is interrupted, and a reason, as it were, given for making it: "To Joshua and his fellows I foretell the coming of 'my servant, Branch,' because they, the priesthood, in all their office and ministry, as well as in what has just happened to them in the vision in the person of their chief, are types of Him."

my servant] A frequent name of Messiah in Isaiah, e.g. xlii. 1; xlix. 6; lii. 13; liii. 11. In Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30; the R. V. has restored the true rendering of παῖς, "Servant," not "Son," or "Child." This vision is thus more distinctly Messianic than those which preceded it.

The Branch] Lit. **Branch**, or **Shoot**, or **Sprout**; the word being used as a proper name without the article. Comp. vi. 12; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15. The use by the LXX. of ἀνατολή, "that which rises or springs up," for Branch in these passages has led to the "Dayspring" (rightly so rendered as the context shews) of Luke i. 78. The early and repeated failures of succeeding High Priests and their fellows to fulfil the conditions and claim the privilege of ver. 7, as we learn from the Books of Ezra (x. 18) and Nehemiah (xiii. 4, 5, 28, 29), and from the Gospel history, must have made this promise of the "Branch" especially precious to the faithful while they waited for its fulfilment (Luke ii. 38).

9. *the stone that I have laid*] *set*, R. V. The primary and imme-

Upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes:
Behold, I *will* engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts,
And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

diate reference is to the Temple, in re-building which Joshua was then engaged. The "stone," which was perhaps seen lying before him in the vision, is most probably not the foundation-stone, which had been laid years before, but the head-stone (iv. 7, 9), which would complete the building, and which He, with whom to purpose is to accomplish, here announces that He has already laid; so certainly shall it be set in its place in due time. The ultimate reference is to Him, who as "the Branch" should hereafter "build the temple of the Lord" (vi. 12), of which He is not only the Foundation-stone (Isaiah xxviii. 16; 1 Peter ii. 4, 5), but also the chief corner-stone (Ps. cxviii. 22; Matt. xxi. 42; Ephes. ii. 20). The two fulfilments of the prophecy are intimately connected. The first is, in the purpose of God, the necessary preparation for the second.

upon one stone shall be seven eyes] **are**, R. V. This may mean that seven eyes shall be, or are, sculptured upon the stone; though in that case it is difficult to understand the force of the word "*one*," or the significance of the prediction as regards the Temple then in progress. Typically, the seven eyes sculptured on the stone might be held to represent Him whom the stone symbolises, as "*having* the seven spirits of God" (Rev. v. 6). It is better, however, to understand the words to be a promise that the seven eyes (i.e. the perfect watchfulness and care—seven being the number of perfection) of God shall be fixed upon this stone; that He will never, so to speak, take His eyes off either type or anti-type, till His purpose respecting them is accomplished. So Solomon prays, at the dedication of the first Temple, that God's "eyes may be open upon it night and day," to hear the prayers that are offered there. 1 Kings viii. 29. This view is confirmed by iv. 10, where the eyes of Jehovah are said to rejoice when (fixed as we are here told in unwearying solicitude on the Temple) they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, as he busies himself in its restoration.

I will engrave the graving thereof] Supposing the eyes to have been marked out for cutting upon the stone, some have thought that God in these words engages that He Himself will cut them there. This clause, however, is rather to be regarded as an additional promise. My eyes, I have said, are fixed upon the stone. My hand shall engrave upon it whatever is needed to beautify and fit it for the place of honour it is to hold. The word here used for "engrave" occurs three times in Exodus xxviii., in the expression "engravings of a signet;" twice of the jewels in the High Priest's dress (11, 21), once of the golden plate on his mitre (36). It is used, however, of a bolder kind of engraving, more like what would here be contemplated, of "cherubim, lions and palm trees," on the panels of the "bases," on which the lavers were set in Solomon's Temple. (1 Kings vii. 36).

in one day] It is possible that the renewal of the typical expiation

10 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts,
Shall ye call every man his neighbour,
Under the vine and under the fig tree.

of sin in "one day," the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 21, 30, 34), consequent upon the re building of the Temple and the resumption of its services, is here glanced at. But the goal of the prophecy is "the day of Golgotha." "A Jewish writer confessed the mystery while he said, '*One day*, I know not what that day is.' Ask any Christian child, 'On what day was iniquity removed, not from the land only, but from all lands?' He would say, 'On the day when Jesus died.'" Pusey.

10. The consequence of the removal of the iniquity of the land shall be the return of the peaceful and prosperous days of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 25), and social intercourse and festivity shall prevail on every side. Micah had already made this a type of the kingdom of Christ (iv. 4).

"We are told in the Talmud (Yoma vii. 4) that when, on the great Day of Atonement, the high priest had performed the various duties of that solemn day, he was escorted home in a festive manner, and was accustomed to give a festal entertainment to his friends. The maidens and youths of the people went forth to their gardens and vineyards with songs and dances; social entertainments took place on all sides, and universal gladness closed the festival of that solemn day." Rev. C. H. H. Wright, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 77, 78.

THE FIFTH VISION. *The Golden Candlestick.* **iv. 1—14.** Roused by the Interpreting Angel from a sleep or stupor, into which he appears to have fallen, ver. 1, the prophet sees a golden candlestick or lamp-stand. Like that originally placed in the Tabernacle, it has seven lamps, but they are fed by a bowl placed above them, from which the oil is conveyed into them by pipes, ver. 2. The bowl itself is supplied with oil by two olive-trees, standing one on either side of the lamp, which empty their oil into the bowl, each through a golden tube, ver. 3, 12. At the request of Zechariah, ver. 4, the Interpreting Angel, with some show of surprise that explanation should be needed, ver. 5, explains to him the meaning of the vision. It is intended to encourage Zerubbabel in the work of re-building the Temple, by impressing upon him the truth, that as that candlestick gave forth its light, in silent, ceaseless splendour, unfed and untended by human agencies, so the work in which he was engaged, of restoring the material Temple and setting the golden candlestick in its place again, and so preparing the way, first for the Jewish Church, and then for the Christian Church, which that candlestick symbolised (Rev. i. 20), to shine in the world, should be accomplished, not by human resources, but by the Spirit of God, ver. 6. The great principle involved in the symbol and thus enunciated is now applied to the case in hand. The mountain of difficulty, which stands in the way of Zerubbabel, shall sink down into a plain. With shouts of festive joy he shall set in its place the crowning stone of the edifice, ver. 7. Yet again, by a repeated assurance conveyed to the prophet through the Angel, ver. 8, Jehovah confirms the promise to Zerubbabel, that his hands which have begun shall complete the work,

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the

and prove in doing so the divine mission of the angel, ver. 9. Despicable as it might appear in its feeble beginnings in the sight of man, the eyes of Jehovah, which were not only fixed upon it with unceasing watchfulness (iii. 9), but ran to and fro through the whole earth to take cognisance of and deal with every hindering and every helping influence, rejoiced to see the progress of that house, ver. 10. Not satisfied with this exposition of its main scope, the prophet asks for information as to some of the details of the vision. What, he would fain know, is the significance of the two olive-trees, ver. 11, or yet more precisely, of the two branches of them, which through the two golden tubes empty their oil into the bowl of the lamp, ver. 12. The answer, again given with some show of surprise at the question, ver. 13, by the Interpreting Angel, is calculated by its obscurity rather to fix attention on the chief lesson of the vision, than to interpret the details to which reference is made. Suffice it to know that the olive trees represent agencies, by which the Lord of the whole earth is pleased to supply the requirements of His Church, ver. 14.

CH. IV.—**1.** *came again and waked me*] Or, *returned and waked me*, i. e. waked me again. Comp. v. 1. "The prophet intimates that he lay as one weighed down with ecstatic sleep, through wonder and astonishment at the preceding vision." Rosenm. Comp. Dan. viii. 18, 27; Luke ix. 32.

2. *I have looked*] Rather, **I have seen**, the word being the same as in the Angel's question, What seest thou?

A candlestick all of gold] The word here used for candlestick (though not restricted to that, 2 Kings iv. 10) is always used of the candlestick in the Tabernacle. That too, like this, was "all of gold." Ex. xxv. 31. "It has been calculated to have been worth £5,076, exclusive of workmanship." *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Candlestick. In Solomon's Temple there were ten candlesticks (1 Kings vii. 49; 2 Chron. iv. 7; comp. Jer. lii. 19), either in addition to, or instead of, the one in the Tabernacle. In Zerubbabel's Temple one candlestick only again was seen, as we learn from this passage and 1 Macc. i. 23, iv. 49; as well as from the sculpture on the Arch of Titus.

a bowl] Rather, **its bowl**, or reservoir. The candlestick in the Tabernacle had no bowl of this kind. The "bowls" which it had (Ex. xxv. 31, 33, 34; xxxvii. 17, 19, 20;—quite a different Heb. word from that here used, and rendered *cups* in R. V.) were ornaments like scallop-shells, or the calix of a flower, on the shaft and branches of the candlestick. The lamps were trimmed daily by the priests (Ex. xxvii. 21). "They were each supplied with cotton and half a log of the purest olive-oil (about two wine-glasses) which was sufficient to keep them burning during a long night." *Dict. of Bible.* The use of the same word as here for the bowl of a hanging lamp, suspended from the

top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to
3 the seven lamps, which *were* upon the top thereof: and two
olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the
4 other upon the left *side* thereof. So I answered and spake
to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my
5 lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and
said unto me, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said,
6 No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me,
saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel,
saying,

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,
Saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel
thou shalt become a plain:

ceiling by a "silver cord," the giving way of which causes the lamp to fall to the ground and be shattered, Eccles. xii. 6, has led some to think that the lamp in Zechariah's vision was hanging also. This, however, is improbable. The addition of the bowl to the holy candlestick has its obvious meaning: "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit," ver. 6. No human agency is now needed. The bowl yields a ceaseless supply of oil.

seven pipes to the seven lamps] This has been variously interpreted to mean either one, two, or seven pipes connecting each lamp with the oil-bowl. The most natural interpretation of our present Hebrew text is, that each lamp of the candlestick was connected by seven pipes with the bowl which fed it with oil, and that the large and perfect number of pipes is intended to symbolise the plentifulness of the supply. *There are seven pipes to each of the lamps.* R. V.

3. *two olive trees*] We learn afterwards (ver. 11, 12) that each of these had a fruit-bearing "branch," which "emptied itself" (its oil) by a golden tube into the oil-bowl of the candlestick. Human agency is again set aside. The berries become oil without the aid of man.

6. *Not by might*, &c.] This is the teaching of the vision, its message from Jehovah to Zerubbabel. Fed "without hands" (Dan. ii. 34) with oil the lamp in the vision shone brightly. So without the resources of human "might and power," which to "these feeble Jews" (Neh. iv. 2) were altogether wanting, but by the "Spirit" of Jehovah, of which the oil was a symbol, should the Church shine yet again on Mount Sion, and eventually as the Church of Christ throughout the world.

7. *great mountain*] Comp. Is. xl. 4; xlix. 11; Matt. xvii. 20, xxi. 21; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. So had the mountain-like obstacles of the power of their captors (Ezra i. 1), and the unwillingness of the people, first to return (ver. 5), and then to persevere in the work (Hag. i. 14), already "become a plain," by the "Spirit of the Lord," stirring up the spirit of man.

And he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it.

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 8

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; 9

His hands shall also finish *it;*

And thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

For who hath despised the day of small *things?* 10

For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven;

They *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two 11
olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? And I answered again, and said unto 12
him, What *be these* two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves? And 13
he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be?* And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These *are* the 14

Grace, grace unto it] i. e. all favour rest upon it! "Faveat ei Deus, faveant homines." Maurer.

9. *thou shalt know*, &c.] It is again asserted that the divine mission of the angel shall be proved by the accomplishment of that which he predicts. Comp. ii. 11; Deut. xviii. 22.

10. *with those seven*] Rather, **even these seven**, as in R. V.

The meaning of the verse is: *For who hath despised the day of small things?* (comp. Hag. ii. 3) *For (seeing that) these seven eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro throughout all the earth, shall rejoice to see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.* Since, then, God beholds the progress of the work with joy and favour, who will venture to despise it?

12. *olive branches*] Having seen the vision (1—3), and received a general explanation of it (4—10), Zechariah now desires a further explanation of one particular feature (11—14). What, he asks, are the two olive trees (11)? and then, immediately recasting his question in more exact terms, the two olive *branches?* The word is allied to, if not identical with, that used for "ears of corn." It may refer to the pointed shape of the twigs of the olive tree, or to the fact that these branches were studded thick with berries, like the grains in an ear of corn. (Kimchi.)

pipes] Rather **tubes**, or **spouts**; the word being different from that translated "pipes," ver. 2. *Which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty*, &c. R. V.

two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

5 Then I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked, and
2 behold, a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length

14. *the two anointed ones*] Rather, **sons of oil** (as in R. V.). "Probably not as themselves anointed (for another word is used for this, and the whole vision has turned on the use of oil as an instrument of light, not of anointing) but as themselves abundantly ministering the stream which is the source of light." Pusey, who compares the expression "son of oil," i.e. fertile in producing oil, Is. v. 1. The reference here is generally supposed to be to Zerubbabel and Joshua, as representing the kingly and priestly offices, the channels through which God supplies His Church. It may be doubted, however, whether the angel does not purposely avoid giving a definite, and especially a *human* meaning to these symbols. The tenor of the whole vision is, "by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." These "sons of oil," then, are agents or agencies, near to God and beyond our ken, "that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." With this view would seem to accord the fact, that the two mysterious "Witnesses," in the Book of Revelation (xi. 4), are spoken of as being "*the* two olive trees...standing before the God of the earth"; with an obvious reference to Zechariah's vision.

THE SIXTH VISION. *The Flying Roll*, v. 1—4. As the cleansing of the priesthood in the fourth vision prepared the way for the restored glory of the Church in the fifth, so the cleansing of the people, by the destruction of individual sinners in the sixth vision, and by the removal of iniquity itself from the land in the seventh, prepares the way for their deliverance, through the complete overthrow of their enemies, in the eighth.

Looking up again the Prophet perceives that the scene has changed once more. Instead of the Golden Candlestick and its accompaniments, which have passed out of view, he now sees a large roll flying through the air, ver. 1, and in answer to the enquiry of the Interpreting Angel, tells him what he sees and how great are its dimensions, ver. 2. The Angel explains to him that the roll is the vehicle of the curse, which it bears inscribed upon it, and which it is commissioned to execute upon impenitent sinners, whether against the first or second table of the law, ver. 3. The swift unerring messenger of Jehovah Himself, it shall enter into the house of every such man and consume it utterly, ver. 4.

1. *I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked*] Rather, **I lifted up mine eyes again and saw** *a flying roll*. Its flight signified the swift coming of punishment; its flying from heaven that the sentence proceeded from the judgment-seat above.

2. *the length thereof*, &c.] The roll was unfolded and opened out. The dimensions of the roll seem merely to be mentioned as an expression of the prophet's wonder at its size. The beholder of such a strange

thereof *is* twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.
Then said he unto me,
This *is* the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth:
For every one that stealeth shall be cut off *as* on this *side* according to it;
And every one that sweareth shall be cut off *as* on that *side* according to it.
I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts,
And it shall enter into the house of the thief,
And into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name:
And it shall remain in the midst of his house,

apparition in the heavens would not unnaturally say how large he took it to be.

3. *earth*] Rather **land**, i. e. the land of Judah.

every one that stealeth] The breach of one commandment of each table of the law, *every one that stealeth*, and so breaks the eighth commandment in the second table, *every one that sweareth* (i. e. falsely by God's name ver. 4), and so breaks the third commandment in the first table, is singled out, perhaps because these were then the most prevalent sins amongst the Jews, as typical of all transgression. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James ii. 10, 11.

on this side according to it] If we retain this translation (or, *on the one side, on the other side*, R. V.) it will mean that the roll was written on both sides, and that on the one side was inscribed the curse against those who broke the first table of the law, and on the other side the curse against those who broke the second table. Some however translate *for every thief shall be driven out hence* (*from hence*, R. V. margin), i. e. from this land, *according to it, and every swearer shall be driven out hence according to it*. The objection to this is, that in the following verse we learn that the mission of the curse is not to expel sinners from the land, but to consume them in it. If with Pusey we take the word "cut off," A. V. to mean "*cleansed away*" (*purged out*, R. V.), as something defiled and defiling, which has to be cleared away as offensive, the objection would be removed. The sinner is cleansed away from the land when he is utterly destroyed.

4. *it shall remain*] *abide*, R. V., "until it has accomplished that for which it was sent, its utter destruction." Pusey.

Mr Wright in his commentary quotes, in illustration of the curse abiding till it has accomplished its mission, the story of Glaucus (Herod. vi. 86), who consulted the oracle as to whether he were at liberty to perjure himself, and retain for his own use a sum of money which had been committed to his trust. The response was that though such a course would be for his present gain, "yet an oath hath a nameless son,

And shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

5 Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what *is* this that
6 goeth forth. And I said, What *is* it? And he said, This *is* an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This *is* their
7 resemblance through all the earth. And behold, there *was*

handless and footless, yet swift in pursuit till he seize and destroy the whole race and house." And accordingly, though Glaucus restored the money and asked forgiveness for the thought of his heart, it was observed that, since to design the evil was to incur the guilt of executing it, his family became extinct.

THE SEVENTH VISION. *The Woman in the Ephah*, v. 5—11. Invited again by the Interpreting Angel to contemplate what was coming into view, ver. 5, Zechariah sees an Ephah, or large measure, appearing on the scene, which he is taught to regard as a representation of the wicked and their doom, ver. 6. From the mouth of the ephah a circular lid or cover of lead is temporarily lifted up, and a woman is seen sitting in the midst of the ephah, ver. 7. This woman, the Angel explains, is a personification of wickedness; and he proceeds to cast her down again into the ephah, from which she had attempted to rise, and to press down the weighty leaden cover on the mouth of the ephah, so as to confine her securely within it, ver. 8. As the prophet gazes again, two women, furnished with stork-like wings, lift up the ephah and bear it swiftly through the air with the woman shut up in it, ver. 9. On his enquiring its destination, ver. 10, he learns from the Angel that it is to be carried into the land of Shinar, and there to find an abiding dwelling-place, ver. 11.

5. *went forth*] or, *came forth*. During the intervals between the visions, when the prophet was overpowered by, or lost in contemplation of, what he had seen, the Interpreting Angel falls into the background. In this case his coming forth again, or appearing on the scene, is expressly mentioned.

goeth forth] or, *cometh forth*, i. e. from the surrounding darkness into clear view.

6. *an ephah*] Lit. **the ephah**. Though it seems impossible to fix accurately the size of the Hebrew ephah (*Dict. of Bible*, Weights and Measures), there can be no doubt that it was not large enough to contain a woman (ver. 7). "This," then, says the angel, "is the (ideal) ephah, or ephah-like vessel, that is coming forth to view." Comp. for the connection of sin with *a measure*, Matt. xxiii. 32, and see Gen. xv. 16; Jer. li. 13.

This is their resemblance] Lit. **their eye**. So we read of the manna, "its eye (i.e. appearance) was as the eye of bdellium," Num. xi. 7. Comp. Lev. xiii. 55; Ezek. i. 4, 16.

This is understood by some to mean: "this" ephah, which thou seest is "their resemblance" (i.e. the resemblance of the wicked) "in

lift up a talent of lead: and this *is* a woman that sitteth in
the midst of the ephah. And he said, This *is* wickedness. 8
And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the
weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lift I up mine 9

all the land," inasmuch as they are now no longer scattered over it, as in the preceding vision, but gathered up in one, like the grains of corn in a measure. It is better, however, to give a wider meaning to the word "this," viz. this ephah, with all that you will see in the vision regarding it, is the resemblance or representation of the wicked through all the land, and of what shall befall them.

the earth] Rather, **the land.**

7. *a talent of lead*] Rather, **a circle of lead**, i.e. a thick circular plate or lamina of lead, which formed the lid or cover of the ephah, ver. 8; *round piece*, R. V. margin. This the prophet saw in the act of being "lifted up" from the mouth of the ephah, in order to give him a view of its contents.

and this] which now comes into view as the lid is raised. To indicate the raising of the cover just at this moment, the R. V. prints the first part of ver. 7 within brackets.

8. *This is wickedness*] This woman that thou seest sitting in the ephah represents the wickedness of the whole land, gathered up, as it were, into one and personified.

the weight of lead] Lit. **the stone of lead**; so called, either because stones were used as weights (comp. our English word "stone"), or because the leaden lid on the mouth of the ephah suggested by its size and weight the stone cover of a well. Gen. xxix. 2.

upon the mouth thereof] Lit. **upon her mouth**; but rightly rendered *thereof*, as the reference seems plainly to be to the ephah, on which the angel firmly fixed the lid, when he had cast down the woman into it.

A different, but less satisfactory, view of the vision has been taken. According to this the woman is seen "having in her hand the leaden weight with which she was wont to traffic, and sitting crouched down in an empty bushel or ephah, as if that were her true seat and throne.... It was a special form of wickedness that was here pourtrayed, namely, unrighteousness as it manifests itself in matters of weight and measure, or, to designate it in our Lord's own words, 'unfaithfulness as regards the unrighteous mammon'...But 'with the same measure that ye mete withal, shall it be measured to you again.' The very instrument which the woman used for her unholy work was to be the means of her confusion. The ephah in which she sat was made the chariot in which she was removed from the land; and the angel, with righteous indignation, seized the woman herself, dashed her down into the ephah as she was about to rise from her sitting posture, and taking hold of the leaden weight, flung the heavy 'stone of lead' upon her mouth. Thus did the angel indicate that 'wickedness' would be a subject of Divine wrath. He smote her in the mouth wherewith she had so often uttered words of lying and fraud; and did so with the very instrument with which

eyes, and looked, and behold, there came out two women, and the wind *was* in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lift up the ephah between the
10 earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked
11 with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it a house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

she was wont to measure her ungodly gain. Thus was her mouth stopped (Ps. cvii. 42; Job v. 16), and the instrument of sin was made the instrument of her punishment." (Rev. C. H. H. Wright.) The moral of the vision, however, is not the destruction, nor even the punishment of wickedness, but its expulsion from the holy land, that it may go to its own place.

9. *looked*] Rather, **saw.**

came out] or **came forth** (as in ver. 5, 6), from the surrounding darkness upon the stage or scene of the vision.

No meaning need be sought for the details of this verse. They merely convey the fact, clothed in imagery in keeping with the vision, that wickedness was borne swiftly from the land. "Pertinent haec ad colorem imaginis." Maurer.

11. *To build it a house*] The word "it" is feminine (lit. **her**), and may refer either to the ephah or to the woman, as the words, *on her own base*, at the end of the verse may also do. It is perhaps simplest to understand the reference in both cases to be to the woman, whose destination was by implication asked in the prophet's question, ver. 10. The house may be either a dwelling-place, or possibly a temple, "as Dagon (1 Sam. v. 2—5), or Ashtaroth (*Ib.* xxxi. 10), or Baal (2 Kings x. 23), had their houses or temples, a great idol temple in which the God of this world should be worshipped." Pusey.

in the land of Shinar] i. e. Babylonia, with a reference perhaps to "that first attempt to array a world-empire against God," which took place in "the land of Shinar." Gen. xi. 2.

it shall be established] i. e. the house.

and set there] Rather, **and she (the woman) shall be made to rest there.** The whole verse will then read, as in R. V., *To build her an house in the land of Shinar: and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place.*

THE EIGHTH VISION. *The Four Chariots*, vi. 1—8. In this vision four chariots appear to the prophet coming upon the scene, along the valley or defile between two mountains of brass or copper, ver. 1. The chariots are drawn by horses of different colours, ver. 2, 3. In answer to the prophet's enquiry, ver. 4, the Interpreting Angel informs him that these chariots represent the four spirits or winds of heaven, which are coming forth from the immediate presence of God, charged with the commands which He had there laid upon them, ver. 5. Of three of these chariots, distinguishing them by

And I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked, and 6
behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass.

the colours of the horses which are yoked to them, the angel then announces the destination. Passing by the first chariot to which red horses were attached, he says that the second which had black horses was on its way to "the north country," the land of Babylon, to be followed thither by the third which was drawn by white horses. The fourth chariot, with its speckled, or piebald horses, was about to visit "the south country," ver. 6; but inasmuch as its horses were specially "strong," their commission was extended, and the whole earth granted them for their course, ver. 7. Upon this the Interpreting Angel cries aloud to the prophet in the name of Jehovah, that by the mission of these His messengers of wrath, His sore displeasure (chap. i. 15) against His enemies and the enemies of His people in the north country is appeased, and His spirit quieted, ver. 8.

1. *turned, and lift up*] Rather, **lifted up again.** Comp. v. 1.
looked] Rather, **saw.**

four chariots] These have very commonly been identified with the four great powers or kingdoms of Daniel's visions (chap. ii., vii.). The first chariot, as to the destination of which the vision is silent, will then represent the Babylonian empire, of which the power was already broken, and which had therefore no future to be foretold. The second and third chariots are, on this supposition, the Medo-Persian and Macedo-Grecian empires, by which successively the overthrow of Babylon, "the north country," was to be completed; while the fourth chariot, the power of Rome, triumphing first over Egypt, "the south country," extends its victorious sway over all the earth. This view, however, is not without its difficulties, and some commentators prefer to regard the chariots generally, in accordance with the interpretation put upon them by the Angel (ver. 5), as swift and mighty engines of destruction (four in number like "the winds of heaven"), which fall with twofold vengeance (ver. 6) on Babylon the latest enemy of Israel, while they execute wrath also upon Egypt (*lb.*), her earlier oppressor, and thus cause that "shaking of all nations," which was the promised precursor of good. Hag. ii. 7.

two mountains] Lit. **the two mountains.** The use of the definite article has been held to indicate the (well-known) mountains, either of Zion and Moriah (which, however, do not appear to have been generally regarded by the Jews as two), or more commonly of Zion and Olives. The chariots would then travel along the valley of Jehoshaphat. This is not, however, necessarily the force of the article (comp. "*the* ephah," ver. 6). It may only mean that the prophet saw the chariots coming into view between "the two mountains," which he had previously noticed though he has not previously mentioned them, as the side-scenes of the picture.

mountains of brass] Denoting, perhaps, that the great powers or agencies, which overthrow empires and shape the destinies of nations,

2 In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second cha-
3 riot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses;
4 and in the fourth chariot grisled *and* bay horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What
5 *are* these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, *which* go forth
6 from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth to-
7 ward the south country. And the bay went forth, and sought to go that *they* might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get ye *hence*, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth.

as they come forth from God (ver. 5), so also have their course defined by the counsels of His irresistible and immutable will.

2. *red horses*] The colours of the horses are not necessarily significant (see i. 8, and note there). They have, however, been interpreted, as for example by Pusey: "Red, as the colour of blood, represented Babylon as sanguinary (Rev. vi. 4)." "The colour *black* doubtless symbolises the heavy lot, inflicted by the Medo-Persians (*Ib.* 5, 6)." "White is a symbol of joy, gladness (Eccl. ix. 8), victory (Rev. vi. 2), perhaps also, from its relation to light of acute intelligence." "The grizzled, the Romans in their mingled character, so prominent in the fourth empire of Daniel (ii. 41—43)."

3. *grisled and bay*] Rather, **spotted and active**, or **strong**, as in margin of A. V. and R. V. They were spotted, perhaps with white spots on a dark ground, "sparsis pellibus albo dixit" (Virgil, *Ec.* ii. 41); comp. Gen. xxxi. 10, 12. In addition to the mention of their distinguishing colour, they are said here to be active, and again in ver. 7, where the reason for this characteristic being mentioned appears in the request which they make.

5. *spirits*] Rather, **winds**. Comp. Rev. vii. 1.

from standing before] as servants to receive His commands. Psalm civ. 4.

6. *the black horses which are therein*] Lit. **(that) wherein are the black horses, (they, the horses) are going forth**, &c., i.e. *The chariot wherein are the black horses goeth forth*, &c. R. V.

the north country] The land of Babylon, see ii. 6.

the south country] probably Egypt. Comp. Dan. xi. 5.

7. *walk to and fro through the earth*] The supposed mixed colour of these horses has been thought to signify a mixed exercise of judgment and mercy by the power which they represent: "partim ut malis supplicia irrogarent, partim ut bonos, si qui supersint, defenderent." Rosenm. But the scope of the vision seems rather to point to judgment exclusively.

Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, 8
these that go toward the north country have quieted my
spirit in the north country.

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Take of 9, 10

8. *cried he upon me*] The word is used of a royal proclamation cried aloud through the city. Jonah iii. 7. Here the loud call of the Angel was probably intended to rouse the prophet's attention to what was the chief point of the vision.

quieted my spirit] Lit. **have caused my spirit to rest**, which was perturbed before with sore displeasure against my enemies (i. 15), but is now at rest because the righteous retribution is completed. Others take "spirit" to be equivalent here, as it is elsewhere (Eccles. x. 4; Prov. xxix. 11, in which latter place, as here, the LXX have *θυμός*), to anger. "*Have made my anger to rest on*, i. e. have carried it thither and deposited it there, made it to rest upon them as its abode, as St John says of the unbelieving, 'the wrath of God abideth on him.'" Pusey. See Ezek. v. 13; xvi. 42.

SYMBOLICAL ACTION. *Crowning of the High-priest*, vi. 9—15. In another of the "divers manners" (*πολυτρόπως*, Heb. i. 1), which He was pleased to adopt, Almighty God now speaks by the prophet. The visions of the night give place to a literal transaction by day, which, however, repeats and confirms their message. Zechariah is directed to go to the house of Josiah in Jerusalem, and to take from certain Jews who were lodging there gold and silver, a portion of the offerings to the House of God, which they had brought from their brethren still in exile, ver. 9, 10. Of this gold and silver he is to make a crown, and put it on the head of Joshua the High-priest, ver. 11. The significant action is to be accompanied by a prediction in the name of Jehovah, that in due time there shall "grow up the Branch," who shall be the true builder of the temple of the Lord, who shall be both King and Priest, and in the exercise of those two offices the author and dispenser of peace, ver. 12, 13. Meanwhile, in gracious remembrance both of those who have brought the offerings and of him who has received them into his house, the crown which has been placed on the High-priest's head is to be hung up in the Temple at Jerusalem, ver. 14, where it will also be a silent prophecy of the day when not only Jewish exiles, but Gentiles also who are now "far off," shall be builders in the spiritual temple. That event, when it comes to pass, will prove the divine mission of the prophet; but obedience on the part of those who hear the prophecy is the condition of their sharing in the blessings of its fulfilment, ver. 15.

9. *came unto me*] There is no note of time. It may well have been shortly after the night on which Zechariah saw the visions, or the day on which he told them to the people.

10. *Take*] Lit. **to take**. This has been thought to be a general direction, extending to all that they had brought, "let (their offerings)

them of the captivity, *even* of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go *into* the house of Josiah the son of Zepha-
11 niah; then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech the high
12 priest; and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying,

Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH;
And he shall grow up out of his place,
And he shall build the temple of the LORD:

be received, or accepted;" the special taking of silver and gold for a particular purpose by the prophet being mentioned in the next verse. But there is no reason whatever to suppose that the Jews who were rebuilding the temple had ever any scruple about receiving such offerings even from heathens (Ezra i. 4, 6, 7; vi. 8—10), so that such a direction would have been superfluous. It is better, therefore, to render with A. V. "*take* (*thou*)" sc. "silver and gold," the direction being interrupted to tell the prophet where to meet with these men, and resumed at the beginning of ver. 11.

the captivity] used of the Jews who had returned from exile to their own land, Ezr. ix. 4, x. 8; but also, as here, of those who were still in exile, Ezek. i. 1, iii. 11, 15.

which are come from Babylon] This clause is transposed in A. V. from the end of the verse where it stands in the Hebrew. It should be left there, as in R. V., and rendered, **to which they are come from Babylon.** It will then read: *Take of the captivity, even of Heldai of Tobijah and of Jedaiah* (*their messengers and representatives*)—*and come thou* (*thyself to take it in person*), *even come into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, to which they have come from Babylon—and take silver and gold*, &c.

11. *crowns*] The plural may perhaps be used for *one* crown (*a crown*, R. V. margin), as it is apparently in Job xxxi. 36. Or there may have been two wreaths or fillets, possibly one of each precious metal, woven into a crown. In ver. 14 where the word again occurs it is joined with a verb in the singular: lit. *the crowns* (*it*) *shall be.* In any case it refers exclusively to the *royal* crown or crowns (Rev. xix. 12). The High-priest's mitre is never called a crown.

Josedech] *Jehozadak.* R. V.

12. *the* **Branch**] See chap. iii. 8 and note.

out of his place] Lit. **from under him.** Comp. for the expression Ex. x. 23; and for the meaning Is. xi. 1; liii. 2. Other less satisfactory renderings are, *it shall grow up under Him*, i.e. all things fair and good shall spring up and flourish under Him. Cf. Pers. *Sat.* 2, 38: "quidquid calcaverit hic, rosa fiat" (Maurer); or, "*He shall sprout forth from under Himself*, i.e. send forth shoots as from a parent stem." (*Speaker's Comment.*)

Even he shall build the temple of the LORD;
And he shall bear the glory,
And shall sit and rule upon his throne:
And he shall be a priest upon his throne:
And the counsel of peace shall be between them both. 13
And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and 14
to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial
in the temple of the LORD. And *they that are* far off shall 15
come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall

13. *Even he shall build*] The repetition of these words from the preceding verse is emphatic, as is the introduction now of the personal pronoun, **He.** It is as much as to say, you are building a temple of the Lord, but the building of the true temple is reserved for **Him.**

bear the glory] i.e. the *royal* majesty, as the word is used Dan. xi. 21; 1 Chron. xxix. 25; though doubtless there lies behind such glory as is spoken of John i. 14, xvii. 5; Heb. ii. 9.

the counsel of peace shall be between them both] This has been explained to mean, that the two offices, the sacerdotal and the regal, being merged in the one person of Him, who "shall be a priest upon His throne," shall be exercised in perfect harmony, as though a treaty of peace were ratified between them. "The counsel of peace," however, would seem to mean more than this, and to denote a counsel, or measure, devised by "them both," of which the fruit would be peace to those whom it contemplated. This counsel, by which peace is procured and bestowed (Ephes. ii. 14; John xiv. 27) is for its execution "between them both," i.e. between the two offices, or rather between the Holder of them both regarded now as King and now as Priest. The view that "them both" refers to the Eternal Father and Messiah, Jehovah and the Branch, though it has been ably advocated, is scarcely warranted by the context, in which the mention of Jehovah is not sufficiently direct and prominent to sustain such a reference.

14. *Helem*] This may of course be another name borne by the person who in ver. 10 is called Heldai. The conjecture, however, that Helem is a copyist's error for Heldai, the difference between the two Hebrew words being slight, is not improbable.

to Hen] Rather (as in R. V. margin), **to the favour, or kindness of the son of Zephaniah**, i.e. the crown suspended in the Temple shall be a lasting memorial, not only of the zeal and piety of these offerers of gifts from a far off land, but also of the kindness shewn them by Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who had received them into his house, ver. 10. "He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." Matt. x. 41.

15. *they that are far off*] Comp. Ephes. ii. 13, 17, where there is perhaps a reminiscence of the οἱ μακρὰν of the LXX. here. "The counsel of peace," and the "building in the temple of the Lord," may also have been in St Paul's mind when he wrote that passage.

know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And *this* shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

7 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth
2 *day* of the ninth month, *even* in Chisleu; when they had sent *unto* the house of God Sherezer and Regemmelech, and

if ye will diligently obey] The meaning is not, that the coming and work of Messiah, but that their share in it depended on their obedience. 2 Tim. ii. 13; Mal. iv. 1, 2; Heb. iv. 9, 11.

THE DEPUTATION FROM BETHEL. Chaps. vii., viii. After the lapse of nearly two years, Zechariah is again called to prophesy, the occasion of his doing so being the arrival at Jerusalem of a deputation, sent from Bethel to enquire whether they ought still to observe a national fast, which had been instituted in the time of the captivity, vii. 1—3. The answer of Almighty God by the prophet falls into four sections (marked by separate paragraphs in R. V.), each of which is introduced by the same formula, vii. 4, 8; viii. 1, 18. The return in the last of these sections (viii. 19) to the question out of which the whole arose, shews that the prophecy is really one. In the first section the people are reminded that their fasting and feasting had alike been observances terminating upon themselves and devoid of religious motive and spiritual aim, and consequently unacceptable to God; in accordance with the teaching of the earlier prophets, in the times of Jerusalem's prosperity, vii. 4—7. In the next section the substance of this teaching, as insisting on moral reformation and not on outward observances, is given; and to the neglect of it are traced the rejection by God of His people, and the calamities that had come upon them in their captivity and dispersion, vii. 8—14. Passing now to a happier strain of hope and promise, the prophetic word tells of the bright days of holiness and prosperity in store for Jerusalem, in contrast with her earlier condition of distress and discord, and urges the people, on the strength of these promises, to holy obedience, viii. 1—17. The concluding section predicts that the question from Bethel shall be solved, by the transformation of the fasts of their captivity into joyful feasts, to which willing multitudes shall throng from all parts of the land; heathen nations joining also in their celebration, and counting it an honour and protection to be associated with a Jew, viii. 18—23.

CHAP. VII. 1—3. THE DEPUTATION AND THEIR QUESTION.

1. *in the fourth year*] This was nearly two years after Zechariah saw his visions (i. 7), and about the same time before the completion of the Temple (Ezr. vi. 15). See General Introd. chap. II. p. 18.

Chisleu] *Chislev.* R. V.

2. *when they had sent unto the house of God*] Rather, **And (or now) Bethel sent.** "Now *they of* Bethel had sent." R. V. Having an-

their men, to pray before the LORD, *and* to speak unto the 3
priests which *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to
the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month,
separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, say- 4
ing, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, 5
saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh
month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast *unto* me,

nounced the fact and the date of the word of Jehovah coming to him again in ver. 1, the prophet breaks off, as it were, to state the occasion of its coming in ver. 2. 3—now, why it came was that Bethel sent, &c. Then in ver. 4 he resumes by repeating the phrase of ver. 1, "and (as I said) the word of the Lord came unto me," and passes on to the message itself. We have a similar construction, with the repetition of the word "take" vi. 10, 11. It is best to regard Bethel here as a proper name. It was one of the cities to which captives had returned (Ezr. ii. 1, 28, "every one unto his own city"), and from it the question here proposed emanated.

Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men] It is better to take these, as in A. V. and R. V., to be the deputation, or persons sent. It is possible, however, to render, *when Bethel*, viz. *Sharezer, &c. sent* (*men*). In that case Sharezer and Regem-melech would probably be the chief men of the city, their names being those which were given them in Babylon. For Sharezer comp. Is. xxxvii. 38; 2 Kings xix. 37. Regem-melech has been supposed to be an official title and to signify, "friend of the king."

to pray before] Lit. **smooth or stroke the face of**, i.e. propitiate or seek the favour of. Comp. chap. viii. 21, 22; Ex. xxxii. 11; Ps. xlv. 12. It is also used of imploring the favour of man, Job xi. 19; Prov. xix. 6.

3. *unto the priests*] See Hag. ii. 11 and note.

which were in] *of* R. V.

and to the prophets] i. e. Haggai and Zechariah.

Should I weep] Similarly the sing. num. is used of a community or nation, Num. xx. 18, 19; Josh. ix. 7, and elsewhere.

in the fifth month] 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9; Jerem. lii. 12, 13, from a comparison of which passages it appears that "from the seventh to the tenth day (of the fifth month) Jerusalem was in flames" (Pusey). While the Temple lay in ruins the Jews had marked this time by an annual fast. Now that it was being rebuilt the question naturally arose, should the fast be continued?

separating myself] Or, *abstaining* from meat and drink (ver. 5 with 6), and from all pleasure, Is. lviii. 5.

4—7. THE ANSWER. FIRST SECTION.

5. *seventh month*] This fast appears to have been observed during the captivity, because in the seventh month "the murder of Gedaliah,

6 *even to* me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink,
7 did not ye eat *for yourselves*, and drink *for yourselves*? *Should ye* not *hear* the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when *men* inhabited the south and the plain?
8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,
9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying,
Execute true judgment,

whom the king of Babylon made governor of the land, completed the calamities of Jerusalem, in the voluntary but prohibited exile to Egypt, for fear lest the murder should be avenged on them." Pusey. See 2 Kings xxv. 25, 26; Jerem. xli.—xliii.

even to me] For the emphatic repetition of the pronoun comp. Hag. i. 4 and note.

6. *did eat and...did drink*] Rather, **eat and drink**, as R. V.

did not ye eat for yourselves, &c.?] Lit. **is it not you who are eating, and you who are drinking?** i. e. is it not simply an act terminating upon yourselves, which in no way affects Me? Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 8.

7. *Should ye not hear the words*] Comp. Is. lviii. 3—7; 1 Sam. xv. 22. To that old teaching it is that you have need to take heed and return. It was uttered in the time of your national prosperity. By neglecting it that prosperity was lost. Only by returning to it can it be regained.

the south and the plain] two of the three divisions of the territory of the tribe of Judah; the *Negeb* and the *Shephēlah* (or *lowland*, R. V.). Perhaps the third division, "the hill country," Luke i. 39, is pointed at in the words, "Jerusalem and the cities thereof round about her." Judg. i. 9; Obad. 19 and note.

8—11. THE ANSWER. SECOND SECTION.

8. *the word of the Lord came*] It is not necessary to suppose that there was a break, or interval of time, between the sections which are introduced by this formula. The frequent appeal to Jehovah, as the Author of their prophecies, is a characteristic of the post-captivity prophets. Comp. chap. viii. (in which the phrase "thus saith Jehovah," or "Jehovah of hosts," occurs thirteen times), Hag. ii. 6, note.

9. *thus speaketh*] Rather, **thus saith**. Some would render, *thus said the Lord of hosts*, i.e. to your fathers by the former prophets (ver. 7), a summary of whose teaching is then given, ver. 9, 10. But a comparison of viii. 1, 2 sq. supports the rendering, *thus saith*, &c. always, to you now, as to your fathers of old. Let their disobedience and its consequences, ver. 11—14, be your warning. The rendering, *Thus hath the Lord of hosts spoken*, R. V., comes much to the same thing.

Execute true judgment] Lit. **Judge judgment of truth.** The phrase, *judgment of truth*, occurs only here and Ezek. xviii. 8.

And shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:
And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stran- 10
ger, nor the poor;
And let none of you imagine evil against his brother in
your heart.
But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the 11
shoulder,
And stopped their ears, that *they* should not hear.
Yea, they made their hearts *as* an adamant stone, lest 12
they should hear the law,
And the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in
his spirit by the former prophets:
Therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.
Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they 13
would not hear;
So they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of
hosts:
But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the 14
nations whom they knew not:
Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed
through nor returned:
For they laid the pleasant land desolate.

11. *pulled away the shoulder*] Neh. ix. 29; Hos. iv. 16.
stopped] Lit. **made heavy**, i.e. dull. Comp. Is. vi. 10. The same word is used of the eyes, Gen. xlviii. 10, and of the tongue, Ex. iv. 10.

12. *an adamant*] perhaps *diamond*, "so called from its cutting and perforating (the original meaning of the word being a *sharp point*, or *thorn*), as the point of a *stylus* was made of diamonds, Jer. xvii. 1." Gesen. "The stone, whatever it be, was hard enough to cut ineffaceable characters (Jer. xvii. 1): it was harder than flint (Ezek. iii. 9). It would cut rocks; it could not be graven itself, or receive the characters of God." Pusey.
in his spirit] Rather, **by His Spirit**, as R. V. The preposition is the same as in the next clause, *by the hand of His prophets*. The Holy Ghost was the Divine Agent, the prophets were the human instruments. Comp. Neh. ix. 30.

14. *with a whirlwind*] Amos i. 14; Job xxvii. 21.
whom they knew not] Deut. xxviii. 33; Jer. xvi. 13.
after them] i. e. after they are removed from it.
passed through nor returned] as we say, *went backward and forward*. Ezek. xxxv. 7. See note on ix. 8.
they laid] Either to be taken impersonally, *it was laid*: or *they* (*the Jews*) *by their sins*.

8 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came *to me*, saying,
2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
I was jealous for Zion *with* great jealousy,
And I was jealous for her *with* great fury.
3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion,
And will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem:
And Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth;
And the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.
4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem,
And every man with his staff in his hand for very age.
5 And the streets of the city shall be full *of* boys and girls
Playing in the streets thereof.
6 Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,

CHAP. VIII. 1—17. THE ANSWER. THIRD SECTION.

1. *Again*] Rather, **And**. See vii. 8, note.

2. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*] "At each word and sentence, in which good things, for their greatness almost incredible, are promised, the prophet premises, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, as if he would say, Think not that what I pledge you are my own, and refuse me not credence as man. What I unfold are the promises of God." Jerome, quoted by Pusey.

I was] Rather, **I am**. Comp. i. 14, where the same tense is so rendered.

with great fury] i. e. against her enemies, as i. 15.

3. *I am returned...and will dwell*] A repetition of the promises i. 16; ii. 10.

a city of truth] Rather, **The city of truth**. Comp. ver. 16, Zeph. iii. 13; and by way of contrast, Nah. iii. 1.

4, 5. We read, as a fulfilment of this prophecy, that in the days of Simon, in the times of the Maccabees, "the ancient men sat all in the streets, communing together of good things" (1 Macc. xiv. 9); while our Lord alludes to the games of children in the market-place, as a familiar incident in His own days. Matt. xi. 16, 17.

6. *in these days*] Rather, **in those days** (as in R. V.), viz. in which it comes to pass. "It is in the day of the fulfilment, not of the anticipation, that they would seem marvellous in their eyes, as the Psalmist says, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes*." Pusey.

Should it also be marvellous in my eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; 7
Behold, I *will* save my people from the east country,
And from the west country;
And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst 8
of Jerusalem:
And they shall be my people, and I will be their God,
In truth and in righteousness.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, 9
ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which *were* in the day *that* the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might

should it also be marvellous] Some would render, *it shall also be marvellous*, i. e. if in the eyes of those who in those days see the fair, prosperous city that has grown out of these blackened ruins, it is marvellous (as it will be), so shall it be also in My eyes. In other words, I Myself count it a marvellous work that I will achieve. It is better, however, to take this clause as a question, as in A. V. and R. V., and to understand it to mean, "the things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

7. *from the east country, and from the west country*] Comp. Is. xliii. 5, 6. The promise is larger than has yet been fulfilled.

8. *in truth and in righteousness*] "These are the conditions of the covenant on both sides." *Speak. Comm.*

9—13. These verses, introduced by the phrase, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, and beginning and ending with the same words, *Let your hands be strong*, form one continuous exhortation to persevere in rebuilding the Temple. The exhortation is grounded upon a comparison of their condition, before and after the time when they began in earnest to build the house of the Lord. The improvement which had already taken place since that time should encourage them to go on building, cheered by fresh prophecies and promises from the mouth of the same prophets who had urged them to begin the work, and of Him whose messengers of good they were.

9. *by the mouth*] Rather, **from the mouth.** R. V.

the prophets, which were, &c.] Remember that "these words" of promise (e.g. ver. 3—8 *supra*) which you are hearing in "these days" are spoken to you by the same prophets who first urged you to the work, and whose earlier promises then made are already being fulfilled to you, ver. 10, 11; Hag. ii. 15—19.

that the temple might be built] Rather, **even the temple, that it might be built**, as R. V. This clause seems to be added to shew that it is not the first laying of the foundation, which was followed by no further progress (Ezr. iii. 10—12), but the vigorous resumption of the

10 be built. For before these days there was no hire for
man, nor any hire for beast; neither *was there any* peace
to him that went out or came in because of the affliction:
11 for I set all men every one against his neighbour. But
now I *will* not *be* unto the residue of this people as *in* the
12 former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed *shall*
be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground
shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their
dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess
13 all these *things*. And it shall come to pass, *that* as ye were

work, a second founding, as it were, with a view to building, in which "the prophets" (Ezr. v. 1, 2) bore so prominent a part, that is here referred to.

10. *these days*] Rather, **those days**, in which you began to build again.

hire] i.e. return for his labour. See Hag. i. 6, 9—11.

the affliction] Rather, **the adversary**. Ezr. iv. 4.

every one against his neighbour] This was the third evil which prevailed—dearth, harassing by their enemies, their own dissensions—in those days when the Temple lay neglected.

11. *now I will not be*] Rather, **now (in this period since ye began to build) I am not**. My attitude towards you is already changed.

the residue] Rather, **the remnant**, as in ver. 12, i.e. the returned captives. See Hag. i. 12, and note.

12. *the seed shall be prosperous*] Lit. **The seed of peace (there shall be)**. This gives a very good sense, when we remember that the Hebrew words here used have a wide meaning. *Seed* is not only that which is sown, but sometimes *seed-time*, or *sowing* (Gen. viii. 22), sometimes *produce* or *harvest* (Job xxxix. 12). *Peace* is *prosperity* and *plenty*. So that the words may be paraphrased, *The processes of agriculture shall prosper*. Another rendering, however, according to which this clause is in apposition with the words immediately following. *The seed (or plant) of peace, namely, the vine, shall give*, &c., has been strongly supported. The vine is then thought to be called "the seed of peace," because "it can only flourish in peaceful times, and not when the land is laid waste by enemies." But one fails to see how this is a peculiarity of the vine. It would seem to be equally true of corn and other products of the earth. Moreover, such an apposition destroys the *balance* of the three following clauses, which form a threefold expansion of the general statement with which the verse begins. In the *Speaker's Commentary* it is said, "The vine is pre-eminently *a plant of peace*." But in all the passages referred to in support of the assertion the fig-tree is associated with the vine. It is difficult, therefore, to see how the vine can be singled out as *the* plant of peace.

to possess] Lit. **to inherit**. Comp. *ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει ταῦτα*, Rev. xxi. 7.

a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, *but* let your hands be strong. For thus saith the 14
LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: so again have I thought in these days 15
to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. These *are* the things that ye shall do; Speak ye 16
every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none 17
of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the LORD.

13. *a curse...a blessing*] Either, the object of cursing and blessing, as men cursed you before so now they shall bless you (Jer. xxii. 9); or a formula of imprecation or benediction, God make thee like them (Jer. xxix. 22; Gen. xlviii. 20; Ruth iv. 11, 12).

heathen] *nations*, R. V.

house of Judah, and house of Israel] Not only the two tribes but the ten. This has never yet been fulfilled.

14—17. "The ground upon which the promise rests is given in vv. 14, 15, and it is closed in vv. 16, 17, by the addition of the condition on which it is to be fulfilled." Keil.

16. *the judgment of truth and peace*] Rather, **truth and the judgment of peace judge ye**, as in R. V. margin. Jerusalem would indeed "be called a city of truth" (ver. 3), when alike in the private intercourse of her citizens (*speak ye every one the truth to his neighbour*), and in the public administration of justice (*in your gates*, Deut. xxv. 7; Job v. 4), truth reigned supreme. *The judgment of peace* is righteous judgment, which alone secures peace.

"If ye judge righteousness, there will be peace between the parties in the lawsuit, according as our rabbies have said in a proverb of the children of men, 'He that hath his coat taken from him by the tribunal, let him sing and go his way.' And they have adduced in proof that verse, 'And all this people shall also go to their place in peace' (Ex. xviii. 23). 'All the people,' even he that is condemned in judgment. And our rabbies of blessed memory have interpreted, *and the judgment of peace*, of reconciliation, for it is said, 'What sort of judgment is that in which there is peace? They answered, 'That of arbitration.'" Kimchi (McCaul's Trans.), quoted by Wright.

18—23. THE ANSWER. FOURTH SECTION.

In coming now to a direct answer to the question, out of which the whole prophecy arose, Almighty God enumerates not only *the fast of the fifth month* to which the question immediately referred (viii. 3), but

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,
19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth *month*,
and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and
the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy
and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth
and peace.
20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
It shall yet *come to pass*, that there shall come people,
And the inhabitants of many cities:
21 And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying,
Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD,
And to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.
22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come
To seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem,
And to pray before the LORD.
23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts;
In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take
hold out of all languages of the nations,

three other fasts (one of which, *the fast of the seventh month*, had been already mentioned, vii. 5), which were all governed by the same general principles. All these, He promises, shall become seasons of joy.

19. *The fast of the fourth month*] had been instituted, because on that day, under the extremity of famine, Jerusalem opened her gates to Nebuchadnezzar. Jer. xxxix. 2, 3; lii. 6, 7.

the fast of the tenth] The siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar commenced in that month. 2 Kings xxv. 1; Jer. xxxix. 1.

therefore love] Lit. **and** (in order that this may happen to you, as the condition of the fulfilment of the promise), **love truth and peace.** Comp. **ver. 16, 17.**

20—23. The joyful change shall extend, in its influence, to the heathen nations of the world. Comp. Is. ii. 2, 3; Micah iv. 1, 2.

20. *people*] Lit. **peoples.** Here probably the *tribes* of Israel (comp. Deut. xxxiii. 3, 19, where the word is used in that sense). In ver. 22, *many peoples*, refers to foreign nations, to whom the prophecy extends itself in that and the following verses.

21. *speedily*] Lit. **come let us go, to go,** which may merely express the earnestness of the exhortation. "Omnes una et magno studio." Rosenm.

to pray before] *or to entreat the favour*, as in vii. 2.

I will go also] The response of one city to the invitation of another. In like manner the inhabitants of a city speak of themselves in the sing. number, 1 Sam. v. 10.

23. *ten men*] i.e. a large number. Comp. Gen. xxxi. 7; Lev. xxvi. 26; Num. xiv. 22; Neh. iv. 12.

Even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying,
We will go with you : for we have heard *that* God *is* with you.
The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of 9
Hadrach,

take hold of the skirt] See Hag. ii. 12, and comp. Is. iv. 1.

THE BURDENS OF THE WORD OF THE LORD. CHAPS. IX.—XIV.

Abruptly and with no preface beyond the title, *The Burden of the Word of the Lord*, prefixed to each of them (ix. 1; xii. 1), the later prophecies of Zechariah are introduced. Each of the two groups into which they are collected occupies three chapters, and each appears to fall into two principal sections.

THE FIRST BURDEN, chaps. ix.—xi., is principally concerned with the history of the chosen people up to and including the first coming of Christ. Christ on earth is the central figure of each of its two sections. The coming of her King to Zion is the proper subject of the first section, chap. ix. x., as His rejection by her, under the title of "Shepherd", is of the second, chap. xi.

CHAP. IX. 1—8. THE PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL'S ENEMIES.

The first section opens with a prediction (ix. 1—8), from which the title of the whole of this first group of prophecies is derived, of the judgments of God upon the enemies of Israel and of the deliverance of Jerusalem, as a preparation for the coming of her King. Jehovah, whose eye is on the affairs of men, will punish the neighbours and enemies of His people on every side, the Syrians (ver. 1), the Phœnicians, in spite of their resources and their wisdom (ver. 2—4), and the Philistines (ver. 5, 6). This last nation shall be converted from idolatry and incorporated into the family of God (ver. 7). Judah and Jerusalem shall be protected from the invading armies by which the surrounding nations are scourged, and shall await in safety the advent of their King (ver. 8).

1. *The burden*] It is difficult to decide between the meanings *burden* and *utterance* (*onus* and *effatum*) for this word, which is of frequent occurrence, especially in Isaiah. If we translate *burden*, it will mean the heavy judgment of Jehovah. In favour of this is the fact that the word is almost always used (Zech. xii. 1; Mal. i. 1, are referred to as exceptions, but the second of these passages can hardly be called so) to introduce a prophecy of judgment. "The sentence issued against an individual or a community hung as a heavy weight, which at last dragged them down." (*Speak. Com.* on Is. xiii. 1. Comp. 2 Kings ix. 25.) On the other hand, from the use of the cognate verb in the sense of "taking up," i.e. "uttering," a word or speech (as, "thou shalt not take up the name of Jehovah, thy God, in vain," Ex. xx. 7;

And Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof:
When the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, *shall be* toward the LORD.
2 And Hamath also shall border thereby;
Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

"He took up his parable," Num. xxiii. 18), many prefer to render *utterance*, or *oracle*.

in the land] *upon the land*, R. V.

Hadrach] This word, which occurs nowhere else in the O. T., caused, till recently, much perplexity to commentators. Some of them explained it to be the name of a king, others of an idol, while others regarded it as a symbolical name composed by the prophet. The question, however, as to the meaning of the word appears to have been satisfactorily set at rest, by its being discovered in the Assyrian inscriptions "in the catalogue of Syrian cities tributary to Nineveh." Sir H. Rawlinson, quoted by Pusey, says, "It is now certain that there was a city called Hadrach in the neighbourhood of Damascus and Hamath, although its exact site is not known...In the Assyrian Canon Hadrach is the object of three Assyrian expeditions."

the rest thereof] Or, *its resting place*, R. V., i.e. the place on which it (the burden, or utterance, of the word of the Lord) shall light and settle. See vi. 8, and note there.

when the eyes of man, &c.] Or, *for the eye...is*, R. V. This has been explained as implying "a conversion of Gentiles, as well as Jews. For *man*, as contrasted with Israel, must be the heathen world, mankind. 'The eyes of all must needs look in adoration to God, expecting all good from Him, because the Creator of all provided for the well-being of all.'" Pusey. Or, since the context, which is minatory in tone, seems not to admit of this interpretation, the words have been thus paraphrased: "When the fulfilment of the oracles takes place upon Hadrach and Damascus, and the wrath of God descends upon those cities and districts, the eyes of the nations as well as those of the people of Israel will look towards Jehovah, and marvel at the wonders of judgment which will then be performed in their sight in accordance with the solemn warnings of the prophet." Rev. C. H. H. Wright. It is, possible, however, to render, **for to Jehovah is** (i.e. **Jehovah has**) **an eye on man, and on all the tribes of Israel**, the sense being that of such passages as Jer. xxxii. 19, and Ps. x. 14.

2. *shall border thereby*] i.e. as it is near Damascus in situation and like it in character, so shall it be the neighbour or companion of Damascus in the calamities which shall come upon it. The clause may, however, be rendered, **And also Hamath, which borders by it** (Damascus), shall be its rest, i.e. the rest of the burden of the Lord, as Damascus was said to be in the former verse. *Which bordereth thereon*, R. V.

though it be very wise] Or, *because she is*, R. V. This is best referred to Tyre, the words, "and Zidon," being almost parenthetical,

And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold,
And heaped up silver as the dust,
And fine gold as the mire of the streets.
Behold, the Lord will cast her out,
And he will smite her power in the sea;
And she shall be devoured with fire.

"Tyre with Zidon." Though Sidon was the mother city it had long been eclipsed by Tyre, to which in the predictions of other prophets (Is. xxiii.; Ezek. xxvii. xxviii.), as here (ver. 3, 4), the chief place is assigned. The "wisdom" of Tyre is specially mentioned by Ezekiel, "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel" (xxviii. 3), and as here (ver. 3) its practical application to the amassing of wealth is noted (ver. 4, 5), and this is made the cause of the judgment that comes upon her (ver. 6, 7).

3. *a strong hold*] There is a paronomasia, or play on the words 'Tyre' and 'stronghold,' in the Hebrew. The reference is to the strongly fortified position of Tyre, which when Alexander attacked it "was situated on an island, nearly half a mile from the mainland. It was completely surrounded by prodigious walls, the loftiest portion of which on the side fronting the mainland reached a height not less than 150 feet; and notwithstanding his persevering efforts he could not have succeeded in his attempt, if the harbour of Tyre to the north had not been blockaded by the Cyprians, and that to the south by the Phœnicians, thus affording an opportunity to Alexander for uniting the island to the mainland by an enormous artificial mole." *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Tyre. "Plurimum fiduciæ Tyro munitionibus insulæ et præparatis rerum copiis." Diod. Sic. XVII. 40.

as the dust] Comp. Job xxvii. 16; 2 Chron. ix. 27.

4. *cast her out*] Or, *dispossess her*, R. V. Lit. **take possession of her**, i.e. by ejecting her and coming into her place. Comp. Ex. xxxiv. 24. Ewald renders less satisfactorily *will impoverish her*.

her power in the sea] The order of the Hebrew words is, *shall smite in the sea her power;* where "power" does not mean only, though it may possibly include, her bastions and fortifications (Ps. xlviii. 14, cxxii. 7), but is to be taken in its widest sense. "The scene of her pride was to be that of her overthrow; the waves which girt her round should bury her ruins and wash over her site. Even *in the sea* the hand of God should find her and *smite* her *in it* and *into it*, and so that she should abide in it." Pusey.

devoured with fire] "Proudly confident in the strength of their island fortress, the Tyrians mocked the attempts of Alexander to reduce their city. Every engine of war suited for defence had been stored up in their bulwarks, and every device which their skilful engineers could suggest was had recourse to, and for a time with marked success. 'Ye despise this land army through confidence in the place that ye dwell in as an island, but I will show you that ye dwell on a continent,' was the language of Alexander (Q. Curtius, *de reb. gest. Alex. Magn.* IV. 2). The shallow channel between the mainland and the island was at last

5 Ashkelon shall see *it*, and fear;
Gaza also *shall see it*, and be very sorrowful,
And Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed;
And the king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.
6 And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.
7 And I will take away his blood out of his mouth,

bridged over by a huge dam of earth erected after repeated failures, and the city which had stood a five years' siege from the Assyrians, a thirteen years' siege from the Chaldæans, was taken after a short siege of seven months by Alexander. Ten thousand of its brave defenders were either massacred or crucified" (2,000 were crucified, from 6,000 to 8,000 are said to have been massacred), "the rest were sold into slavery, none escaped save those who were concealed by the Sidonians in the ships. Q. Curtius adds distinctly (IV. 4) that 'Alexander having slain all, save those who fled to the temples, ordered the houses to be set on fire.'" Rev. C. H. H. Wright.

5. *her expectation*] The cities of Philistia, to which (ver. 5—7) after the subjugation of Syria (ver. 1, 2) and Phœnicia (ver. 3, 4), the scourge passed, had naturally looked to Tyre to check the course of the invader and so save them from his onslaught.

the king shall perish from Gaza] Rather, a king. The prediction is, not that the then reigning monarch should perish, but that monarchical government should cease. No argument can be drawn from this in favour of the ante-captivity date of this prophecy. It had been the policy of the Assyrians, Chaldæans and Persians to leave tributary kings in the countries which they subdued. Hence their own monarchs assumed the title of "king of kings" (Ezr. vii. 12; Ezek. xxvi. 7; Dan. ii. 37), and as Herodotus states it was the custom of the Persians to put honour upon the sons of the kings whom they had deposed and promote them to the sovereignty of their fathers (iii. 15). Alexander on the contrary pursued an entirely different plan and aimed at a consolidated empire. Such tributary monarchies were therefore abolished by him. Hegesias, a writer contemporary with Alexander, states that the king of Gaza was brought alive to the conqueror after the capture of the city, which in spite of the fate of Tyre had held out for five months. There is considerable difficulty in reconciling the statements of different writers on this point, but there seems no reason to doubt that the ruler of Gaza bore the title of "king" at that time.

6. *a bastard*] The word only occurs here and in Deut. xxiii. 2 (3, Heb.). There it is probably used of one born of incest or adultery. (*Speaker's Commentary*, Vol. I. pt. ii. p. 884.) Here perhaps it is employed rather as a term of contempt, "a mixed and ignoble race" (*a bastard race*, R.V. margin), than in its strictly literal sense. The LXX. who render ἐκ πορνῆς in Deut. have here ἀλλογενής.

7. *his blood out of his mouth*, &c.] Lit., bloods, i.e. blood as shed

And his abominations from between his teeth:
But he that remaineth, even he, *shall be* for our God,
And he shall be as a governor in Judah,
And Ekron as a Jebusite.
And I will encamp about mine house because of the 8
army,

(comp. Gen. iv. 10). According to Calvin the Philistine, the nation personified, is here compared to a wild beast from whose jaws the prey which he is devouring is torn. "Abominationes enim intelligit quicquid injusta violentia ad se traxerant. Et comparat eos feris bestiis, quæ non modum carnem devorant, sed etiam hauriunt sanguinem ipsum, et lacerant crudas carnes." The objection to this interpretation is that the word rendered "abominations" can hardly refer to the victims or the spoils of the cruelty or rapacity of the Philistine. It is a word of frequent occurrence in the O. T. and is used almost always (Nah. iii. 6, "abominable filth," is an exception) of "idols in that they were abominations." (Comp. 1 Kings xi. 5, 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13; and Dan. xi. 31 with Matt. xxiv. 15, *τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως*). It is probably best therefore, with the majority of modern commentators, to understand the reference to be to idolatrous sacrifices eaten by the worshippers with the blood. From these pollutions the survivors of the Philistines should be cleansed and so prepared for that incorporation into the commonwealth of Israel, which the remainder of the verse predicts.

but he that remaineth] Rather, **and he too shall remain** (or, be a remnant, R.V.) **for our God.** "Of the Philistines too, as of Israel" (but may it not be, as of the other nations mentioned in these verses?), "*a remnant shall be saved.* After this visitation their idolatry should cease; God speaks of the Philistine nation as one man; He would wring his idol-sacrifices and idol-enjoyments from him; he should exist as a nation, but as God's." Pusey.

as a governor] Lit., **the head over a thousand, a chiliarch.** *A chieftain*, R.V. The tribes of Israel both during the Exodus (Num. i. 16, x. 4), and after their settlement in Canaan (Josh. xxii. 21, 30; 1 Sam. x. 19; Micah v. 1) were divided into thousands. The word here used for the chief of such a division is used again for a Jewish chief in this Book (xii. 5, 6). Elsewhere it is commonly used of the chiefs of Edom (Gen. xxxvi. 15 seq.; 1 Chron. i. 51—54). The meaning is that the Philistine, the nation personified as before, shall take his place, ruler and people, as one of the divisions of the Jewish nation.

Ekron as a Jebusite] The Jebusites had held their own in the midst of the chosen people, possessors of the stronghold of Sion up to the time of David (Josh. xv. 63); but at last had been merged and lost in Israel. So should it be with the Philistines, who are here intended by Ekron. They too shall be absorbed into the Jewish church and nation, when the ultimate goal of the prophecy is reached.

8. *about mine house*] Rather, **for my house.** It is a kind of *dativus*

Because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth:
And no oppressor shall pass through them any more:
For now have I seen with mine eyes.

commodi. I will pitch my camp for (the sake of, the protection of) my house, i.e. either of the Temple, or of the people. Comp. iii. 7, note.

because of] Lit. **from**, which may mean, *so as to defend it from the army, from him that passeth by*, &c. The R.V. renders, *against the army, that none pass through or return.*

that passeth by, and...that returneth] This is referred by Pusey to "Alexander, who *passed by* with his army on his way to Egypt, and *returned* having founded Alexandria." But the use of the phrase in the more general sense of "going backward and forward," both in this Book (vii. 14, note) and in the only other places where it occurs in the O.T. (Ex. xxxii. 27; Ezek. xxxv. 7), shews that the reference is more general, to the overrunning of the land by an invading army. The fact that of the four places in which alone this phrase occurs two are in this Book and one in each division of the Book, is in favour, so far as it goes, of a single authorship.

now have I seen with mine eyes] God is said to "see," when He so takes notice of the actions of men as to interpose, as He here promises to do, for the deliverance of His people and the destruction of their enemies. Ex. ii. 25; iii. 7, 9. Comp. ver. 1 *supra*. "Nihil aliud exprimere verba possunt, quam velle Jovam in populum suum ejusque hostes jamjam intentos habere oculos, ut illum servet, hos perdat." Maurer.

The story of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, as it is gathered from Josephus (*Ant.* Bk. XI. c. 8) and from the Talmud is thus related by Dean Stanley. After the conquest of Tyre and Gaza, Alexander had approached Jerusalem, when "suddenly from the city emerged a long procession, the whole population streamed out, dressed in white. The priestly tribe, in their white robes; the High Priest, apparently the chief authority in the place, in his purple and gold attire, his turban on his head, bearing the golden plate on which was inscribed the ineffable name of Jehovah.....It was at the sunrise of a winter morning, long afterwards observed as a joyous festival, when they stood before the king. To the astonishment of the surrounding chiefs Alexander descended from his chariot and bowed to the earth before the Jewish leader. None ventured to ask the meaning of this seeming frenzy, save Parmenio alone. 'Why should he, whom all men worship, worship the High Priest of the Jews?' 'Not him,' replied the king, 'but the God whose High Priest he is I worship. Long ago, when at Dium in Macedonia, I saw in my dreams such an one in such an attire as this, who urged me to undertake the conquest of Persia and succeed'...Hand in hand with the High Priest, and with the priestly tribe running by his side, he entered the sacred inclosure, and offered the usual sacrifice, saw with pleasure the indication of the rise of the Grecian power in the prophetic books, granted free use of their ancestral laws, and specially

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee:
He *is* just, and having salvation; 9

of the year of jubilee inaugurated so solemnly a hundred years before under Nehemiah, promised to befriend the Jewish settlements of Babylonia and Media, and invited any who were disposed to serve in his army with the preservation of their sacred customs." *Jewish Church*, Vol. III., Lect. xlvii. Without denying that the story is in a legendary dress, we may admit the "probability" of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, and the certainty that the city was spared, and the people favoured by him, in accordance with the terms of Zechariah's prophecy.

9—17. The Coming of the King.

The great event for which all that had been foretold in the preceding verses of the chapter, and indeed all the preceding history of Israel and of the world, had been a preparation, and in which as purposed and promised by God was the pledge of Israel's preservation for its accomplishment, is now announced and its consequences are unfolded. Sion is called upon to welcome with exultation her just and lowly King, who comes to her in humble state (ver. 9), whose kingdom of peace shall cover all the land and embrace all nations (ver. 10), and who, mindful of His covenant with her, shall give deliverance to the captives of Israel (ver. 11, 12). Using them, now once more an united nation, as the instruments of His warfare (ver. 13), Himself fighting for them and manifesting Himself as their Protector (ver. 14), He will make them victorious over all their enemies (ver. 15), and will promote them to safety and honour (ver. 16), magnifying His "goodness" and His "beauty" in the prosperity with which He crowns them (ver. 17).

9. *thy King cometh*] The reference to Christ, the true King of Israel, is direct and immediate. Even if the prophecy be placed before the exile, no event in Jewish history answers, even typically, to this prediction. After the exile no Jewish ruler bore the title of King. "The prophet here briefly shews the manner in which the church is to be restored, namely, because a King will come forth of the tribe and family of David, to bring all things to their pristine order. And this line of argument constantly occurs in the Prophets, since the hope of the ancient people rested, as ours does, on Christ." Calvin.

unto thee] not only to thee locally, but *for thy benefit*. "He teaches us that this King will not come for His own sake, as earthly princes rule after their own lust, or for their own advantage: but that this kingdom will be shared by the whole people, because, that is, of the prosperous condition which it will introduce." Calvin.

having salvation] Rather, **saved**. The Jewish and Christian (LXX. σώζων; Vulg. salvator) versions render actively, "Saviour." But there is no need to depart from the grammatical and usual (Deut. xxxiii. 29; Ps. xxxiii. 16; Is. xlv. 17) meaning of the word. "He trusted in Jehovah that He would deliver Him," was not only a prediction of the

Lowly, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass.
10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,

taunt of His enemies (Matt. xxvii. 43), but an exposition of the ruling principle of the mediatorial work of the man Christ Jesus. And as the reward of that trust He was "saved." Heb. v. 7. At the same time, as Calvin (whose whole note on this verse is worth consulting) points out, the active signification of saving others is really included in the passive of being saved Himself. For inasmuch as the King comes not for Himself but "for" Sion (see last note), He is "just and saved" not for Himself but for her. "Si veniret sibi privatim, esset etiam sibi *justus et servatus*, hoc est, utilitas justitiæ et salutis resideret penes ipsum solum, vel in ejus persona. Sed quum aliorum respectu venerit, etiam in eorum gratiam et justitia et salute præditus est. Ergo justitia et salus quarum hic fit mentio pertinent ad totum corpus Ecclesiæ, neque restringi debent ad personam Regis...Neque certe humanitus loquendo dicemus Regem esse salvum et integrum, si expulsus sit a suo imperio; si deinde ab hostibus vexentur subditi, vel pereant in totum."

lowly] or *meek*. πραΰς. LXX. and Matt. xxi. 5. The sense, "afflicted," which the Heb. word will bear, and which Pusey says is necessarily contained in it, does not seem to be the prominent one here; but rather the meekness and lowliness (Matt. xi. 29) of His character and coming.

upon an ass] In keeping with and as an illustration of His "lowliness." "In itself it would, if insulated, have been unmeaning. The Holy Ghost prophesied it, Jesus fulfilled it, to shew the Jews of what nature His kingdom was." Pusey. So Calvin observes that the prophecy was at once metaphorical and literal. "Nam propheta intelligit Christum fore quasi obscurum hominem, qui sese non extollet supra communem vulgi modum. Hic est genuinus sensus. Verum est: sed tamen hoc non obstat, quominus Christus etiam ediderit hujus rei specimen, ubi asinum illum conscendit."

the foal of an ass] Lit. of she-asses; i.e. such as those animals bear. So Jephthah is said (Judges xii. 7) to have been buried "in the cities of Gilead;" i.e. (as the A. V. and R. V. supply) in "one of" them. Comp. Gen. xix. 29, xxxvii. 31. The clause is added to define more exactly the words, "upon an ass:" *even upon a colt*, R. V. It was upon the colt that our Lord actually rode. The Evangelist's addition, "whereon never man sat" (Mark xi. 2), would seem to indicate that it was chosen, rather than the mother, on account of the sacred use to which it was to be put. Comp. Num. xix. 2; 1 Sam. vi. 7; Luke xxiii. 53.

10. *I will cut off*] Like Himself and His advent shall the character of His kingdom be. Not by weapons of earthly warfare shall it be established. As a kingdom of peace it shall cover the widest extent of the promised land, and thence extend over all the heathen nations of the world. Compare Isaiah's prophecy (ix. 4—6): "for every greave of the warrior tramping with noise, and every (military) cloak rolled in blood shall be consigned to burning as fuel of fire. For unto us a

And the horse from Jerusalem,
And the battle bow shall be cut off:
And he shall speak peace unto the heathen:
And his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea,
And from the river *even* to the ends of the earth.
As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant 11
I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.

Child is born...and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called...the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end."

from Ephraim] The use of this name to denote the ten tribes (comp. ver. 13 and x. 7) is not, as has been alleged, conclusive as to the ante-captivity date of this part of this Book. It is true that the name is not so used in "acknowledged post-captivity writings," but it does not follow that because a writer so uses it, he is not a post-captivity writer. In chap. viii. 13 of this Book, which is confessedly written after the captivity, the "house of Judah" and the "house of Israel" are distinguished. And in a prophecy during the captivity, and why not therefore in one after it? the ten tribes are distinguished from the two by this very name of Ephraim. Ezek. xxxvii. 15—28.

from sea even to sea, &c.] Identical with Ps. lxxii. 8, where Dean Perowne quotes Pusey (*Daniel*, p. 480), "From the Mediterranean, their Western boundary, to the encircling sea beyond Asia's utmost verge; and from their Eastern boundary, *the river*, the Euphrates, *unto the ends of the earth*," and adds, "But perhaps we have only a poetical expression, not to be construed into the prose of geography, or to be explained (as by Rashi and others) as indicating the extent of territory laid down in Exod. xxiii. 31."

11. *As for thee also*] Lit. also thou, i. e. as regards thee (O daughter of Sion), I will also (in addition to all that has been promised, ver. 9, 10) liberate thy captives." So Maurer: "Gaude, Sionia! veniet rex tuus tibi, justus cet.; removebuntur instrumenta belli, alta pax erit; auctum erit imperium tuum mirum in modum; *etiam captivos tuos*, qui in terris exteris detinentur, tibi restituam memor fœderis facti cum majoribus."

by the blood of thy covenant] *because of*, &c. R. V., i. e. *the covenant which I have made with thee*. Exod. xxiv. 5—8. Comp. for the higher reference, Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 15.

the pit wherein is no water] The "pit," Gen. xl. 15, or "house of the pit," Exod. xii. 29; Jer. xxxvii. 16, as denoting the nature of its dungeons, which may in some cases have been actually empty wells (comp. Gen. xxxvii. 24), is a common name for a prison in the O. T. The expression, "wherein is no water," is probably added to emphasize the horrors of such a dungeon. "The prisoner in the land of his enemies was left to perish in the pit (Zech. ix. 11). The greatest of all deliverances is that the captive exile is released from the slow death of

12 Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope:
Even to day do I declare *that* I will render double unto thee;
13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow *with* Ephraim,
And raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece,
And made thee as the sword of a mighty *man*.
14 And the LORD shall be seen over them,

starvation in it (Is. li. 14). The history of Jeremiah, cast into the dungeon or pit (Jer. xxxviii. 6, 9), let down into its depths with cords, sinking into the filth at the bottom (here also there is no water), with death by hunger staring him in the face, shews how terrible an instrument of punishment was such a pit. The condition of the Athenian prisoners in the stone-quarries of Syracuse (*Thuc.* VII. 87), the Persian punishment of the *σπόδος* (Ctesias, *Pers.* 48), the oubliettes of mediæval prisons present instances of cruelty more or less analogous." *Bible Dict.*, Art. "Pit."

12. This verse coheres closely with the verse which precedes it, and a full stop should be printed at the end of it, as in R. V. There is a sharp contrast between the *stronghold* here and the *pit* there. And the *prisoners of hope* in this verse are the *prisoners* to whom, while yet in the *pit*, the promise and hope of deliverance had been given in that verse.

strong hold] There may be a reference to the hill of Zion, or to the rocky fastnesses of Palestine, to which the exiles who had escaped from the pit or dungeon in Babylon were to *turn*, or *return;* but it may be merely a figurative expression (comp. Ps. xl. 2), and certainly is so in its higher spiritual and Christian application (Luke iv. 18—21).

prisoners of hope] Comp. *ἡ κτίσις ὑπετάγη ἐπ' ἐλπίδι, κ. τ. λ.*, Rom. viii. 20, 21.

double] Comp. Is. lxi. 7. From Exod. xvi. 22, Job xlii. 10, it would appear that this means a very large and full measure (lit. twice as much as before) of blessing and prosperity.

13—17. The prophecy now moves forward, and takes for its groundwork a later epoch in the future history of the Jews. As their deliverance from their enemies without fighting, in the times of Alexander (ver. 1—8), was foretold as the pledge and type of Messiah's kingdom of peace (ver. 9—12), so their victories over the Seleucidæ, in the times of the Maccabees, are in these verses foretold as the pledge and type of Messiah's victories over all His enemies.

13. *bent*] Lit. **trodden**, because the foot was placed on the bow in bending it. The warriors of Israel are weapons in the hand of God. Judah is the bow, Ephraim the arrow, the sons of Zion are now raised or lifted up by Him as a spear (comp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 18, where the Heb. word is the same), now wielded as a sword.

The R. V. gives the tenses in this verse more accurately: *For I have bent, I have filled*, &c., *and I will stir up, and will make*, &c.

And his arrow shall go forth as the lightning:
And the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet,
And shall go with whirlwinds of the south.
The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall 15
devour,
And subdue *with* sling stones;
And they shall drink, *and* make a noise as *through* wine;
And they shall be filled like bowls, *and* as the corners of
the altar.
And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as 16
the flock of his people:
For *they shall be as* the stones of a crown, lifted up as an
ensign upon his land.
For how great *is* his goodness, and how great *is* his 17
beauty!

14. *whirlwinds of the south*] which were the most vehement and destructive. Is. xxi. 1; Job xxxvii. 9.

15. *The Lord of hosts shall defend them*] See, for examples of the first fulfilment, 1 Macc. iii. 16—24, iv. 6—16, vii. 40—50.

devour] It is not said what they shall devour. Calvin takes this and what follows literally of eating and drinking, i.e. of enjoying plenty: "Adjungit etiam fore illis copiam panis et vini, ut saturentur." Others, as Pusey, supply "their enemies" after "devour" and take it as an image of "destruction or absorption only, as in that, *thou shalt consume* [lit. *eat*] *all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee*, Deut. vii. 16." Comp. Num. xiv. 9. But then no adequate sense is given to the following clauses, *Thou shalt drink*, &c. It seems best to regard the whole as a figurative description of a wild beast devouring its prey: *they shall devour* (the flesh of their enemies, comp. Num. xxiii. 24); *they shall tread on* (them, as on) *sling stones; they shall drink* (their blood) *and make a noise as through wine; they shall be filled* (with it) *like bowls* (which hold the blood of the sacrifices), *like the corners of the altar* (round which it is copiously poured). See Lev. iv. 7, 18, 30.

sling stones] Comp. Job xli. 28, 29. The comparison of the Israelites to the precious "stones of a crown" in the next verse favours the view that their enemies themselves, and not the weapons which they hurl at them, are here compared to the "stones of a sling." "Their enemies shall fall under them, as harmless and as of little account, as the sling-stones which have missed their aim (or spent their force), and lie as the road to be passed over." Pusey.

16. *lifted up as an ensign upon*] Rather, **raised aloft over**, or perhaps, **shining**, or **glittering**. So R. V. *lifted on high over*. Margin, *glittering upon*.

17. *his goodness...his beauty*] i.e. either Israel's (*their prosperity*, R. V. margin), as thus delivered and honoured by God (comp. Hos. xiv.

Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

10 Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain;
So the LORD *shall* make bright clouds,

6), or God's, the exclamation being drawn from the prophet by the consideration of the great things he had been commissioned to make known. "The goodness and the beauty are the goodness and beauty of God, whose great doings had been his theme before." Pusey, who quotes Osirius: "The prophet, borne out of himself by the consideration of the Divine goodness, stands amazed while he contemplates the beauty and Deity of Christ: he bursts out with unwonted admiration! How great is His goodness, who to guard His flock shall come down on earth to lay down His life for the salvation of His sheep! How great His beauty, who is the *brightness of the glory and the Image of the Father*, and comprises in His Godhead the measure of all order and beauty!"

CHAP. X. THE PROPHECY CONTINUED.

This chapter is not a new prophecy but a continuation and expansion of the promises made in chap. ix. The coincidences of thought and even of language (as Maurer points out) are numerous and striking (see the references in the notes below). The first two verses of the chapter are intimately connected both with what precedes and with what follows them, so that there is a difference of opinion as to which of the two paragraphs they properly belong to. The promise of abundance of corn and wine, ix. 17, leads the prophet, true to his vocation to reform the present while he predicts the future, to call upon his countrymen to look for these blessings from the hand of God, ver. 1, and not from idols and diviners who had only deceived them and brought calamities upon them, ver. 2. The evil rulers, who for their sins had been set over them, shall, however (he foretells in resumption of the prophecy of the former chapter), be replaced by true leaders, ver. 3, 4, who shall lead them to victory, ver. 5. The ten tribes shall share with the two the promised blessings, ver. 6, 7. From all parts of the earth shall they be brought back to their own land, ver. 8—10, God Himself being as of old their Leader, ver. 11, and shall serve Him there, ver. 12.

1. *the latter rain*] Would you have even now a measure at least of the promised abundance, seek it of Jehovah; look to Him for the rain that prepares (Ps. lxv. 9, 10), as well as for the crowning gift itself (Ib. ver. 11) of "corn" and "wine." The *latter rain* fell in March or April and served to swell the grain now coming to maturity. The former rain fell in the autumn. (Deut. xi. 14; Joel ii. 23. Comp. Jer. iii. 3.)

so the Lord shall make bright clouds] Rather, **it is the Lord who makes lightnings** (as in the margin, or, *even of the Lord that maketh lightnings*, R.V.), which usher in and accompany rain: therefore of Him must you ask it. Comp. "He hath made lightnings for the rain,"

And give them showers of rain,
To every one grass in the field.
For the idols have spoken vanity, 2
And the diviners have seen a lie,
And have told false dreams;
They comfort in vain:
Therefore they went their way as a flock,
They were troubled, because *there was* no shepherd.
Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, 3
And I punished the goats:
For the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah,
And hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.
Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the 4
nail,

Ps. cxxv. 7. "*For the rain;* i.e. so that the rain follows the lightning; see Jer. x. 13, li. 16. The lightning is supposed to precede the rain. A common Arabic proverb says of a man who turns out other than was expected of him, that he lightens but does not rain." Dean Perowne.

grass] Rather, **herb**, including food for man, Gen. i. 29.

2. *idols*] Lit. **teraphim**. They were of human form, whether busts or full-length figures, and were apparently sometimes (1 Sam. xix. 13), if not always (Gen. xxxi. 19), of life size. Compare, for the use of them in divination, as here, Ezek. xxi. 21.

they comfort in vain] when they promise rain and fruitful seasons. Comp. Jer. xiv. 22.

therefore they went their way] *therefore* (because they have had recourse to idols and diviners) *they* (the Israelites) wander and stray about to their hurt, like sheep without a shepherd.

3. *was kindled...punished...hath made*] *is kindled...will punish...shall make*, R. V.

the shepherds] who though they were "no (true) shepherds," yet retained the name and office. Quite parallel is the passage in Ezekiel (xxxiv. 5, 6 with 7—10); where also (ver. 17—22), as here, the rulers and principal men are spoken of as "goats," as well as "shepherds."

his goodly horse] Comp. ix. 13; and for the image of the war-horse, Job xxxix. 19—25.

4. *out of him came forth*] Rather, **from him** (Judah) *shall* come **forth**. Comp. Jer. xxx. 21. Some, however, take it to mean "from Him, Jehovah, shall proceed," &c. Comp. Ephes. iv. 11.

the corner] i.e. *the corner-stone*, which was the stay and ornament of the whole building. Is. xxviii. 16; Ephes. ii. 20.

the nail] or **peg**, from which, firmly fixed and stable, the furniture of the house could be suspended. Is. xxii. 23, 24.

Out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.

5 And they shall be as mighty *men*, which tread down *their enemies*
In the mire of the streets in the battle:
And they shall fight, because the LORD *is* with them,
And the riders on horses shall be confounded.

6 And I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph,
And I will bring them *again* to place them; for I have mercy upon them:
And they shall be as though I had not cast them off:
For I *am* the LORD their God, and will hear them.

7 And *they of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty *man*,
And their heart shall rejoice as *through* wine:
Yea, their children shall see *it*, and be glad;
Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

8 I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them:

oppressor] or, ruler, as in R. V. margin, a sense which the word will bear in Is. iii. 12; lx. 17. Every ruler, civil and military, "the corner-stone," "the nail," "the battle-bow," shall proceed from Judah, blessed by God, or from God, as His gift to Judah, as the need of the state requires. Calvin, however, and others would give the word its more common sense, and understand, civil rulers for the well-being of the state, "the corner," "the nail;" military leaders, for its defence and extension, "the battle-bow;" governors to keep in subjection provinces annexed and conquered by the battle-bow, "the oppressor."

5. Comp. ix. 15.

6—12. THE RETURN OF THE WHOLE NATION TO THEIR OWN LAND.

6. *bring them again to place them*] A single word in Hebrew, which however is irregular in form, and may be referred to either of two regular forms, meaning respectively, "I will cause them to return," "I will cause them to dwell." The A. V. with the Jewish commentators, followed by Rosenm. and Pusey, regards the combination of the two forms as designed by the writer to combine the two ideas. (Comp. Jer. xxxii. 37.) It is more probable, however, that one only of the two ideas is here intended, *I will bring them again* (or, *cause them to dwell*, margin), R. V.

7. *as through wine*] Comp. ix. 15.

8. *I will hiss for them*] "Formerly God had so spoken of His summoning the enemies of His people to chastise them (Is. vii. 18, 19; v. 26, 27). He would gather them like the countless numbers of the

And they shall increase as they have increased.
And I will sow them among the people : 9
And they shall remember me in far countries ;
And they shall live with their children, and turn again.
I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, 10
And gather them out of Assyria ;
And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon ;
And *place* shall not be found for them.
And he shall pass through the sea *with* affliction, 11

insect creation, which if united would irresistibly desolate life. He would summon them as the bee-owner, by his shrill call, summons and unites his own swarm. Now, contrariwise, God would summon with the same His own people. The fulfilment of the chastisement was the earnest of the ease of the fulfilment of the mercy." Pusey.

as they have increased] i. e. formerly in Egypt. Exod. i. 7, 12. "Multiplicabuntur in exsilio, ut multiplicati fuerunt in Ægypto." Jarchi, quoted by Maurer. Comp. Ezek. xxxvi. 10, 11.

9. *I will sow them among the people*] **peoples**, R. V. Their dispersion among the nations of the earth shall not be for their destruction, but like the sowing of corn, which is scattered broad-cast, not that it may be lost and perish, but that it may bring forth much fruit. Comp. Hos. ii. 23. "Ego eos multiplicabo, ut dispersio in populis non videatur esse divisio, sed sementis operatio, et liberorum et nepotum segete multiplicata vivant cum filiis suis." Hieron.

they shall live] Comp. Ezek. xxxvii. 14.

turn again] or, **return** to God. Jer. iii. 12, 14; Is. x. 21. The consequent return to their own land is promised in the next verse.

10. *Egypt...Assyria*] It is of *Ephraim*, or *the ten tribes*, that the prophet is here speaking. In ver. 3—6 of this chapter the promise is to *the house of Judah*. In ver. 6 *the house of Joseph* is introduced as sharing in it. In ver. 7—12 this part of the promise is exclusively pursued. Hence, there is no mention here of the return of the two tribes from Babylon, not because, as has been alleged, this prophecy was written before their captivity, but because (not only was that return already open to them all and an accomplished fact to many of them, but) *they* are not contemplated here. In like manner Hosea speaks of Egypt and Assyria, as the countries from which Ephraim should return (xi. 11).

Gilead, Lebanon] the territory assigned to these tribes on the E. and on the W. of Jordan.

place shall not be found] Comp. Is. xlix. 20.

11. *he*] i. e. Jehovah, as He did through the Red Sea, when He gave the first great deliverance to His people.

with affliction] i. e. to His enemies. Comp. Exod. xiv. 24, 25, 27, xv. 3—7. This is perhaps the best rendering of this difficult and much disputed clause. *The sea of affliction*, R. V.

And shall smite the waves in the sea,
And all the deeps of the river shall dry up:
And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down,
And the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.
12 And I will strengthen them in the LORD;
And they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.
11 Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.

smite the waves] Comp. Exod. xv. 8. See also Is. xi. 15, 16, where a similar reference occurs to the passage of the Red Sea.

the river] i. e. *the Nile*, as the Heb. word used indicates.

12. *walk up and down*] i.e. pursue the course of their lives. Comp. Mic. iv. 5; Coloss. iii. 7.

CHAP. XI. THE REJECTION OF THE SHEPHERD.

In this chapter, which forms the second section of the First Burden, we have, so to speak, a companion picture to that drawn in the first section. If that picture, however, was bright with the coming of the King, the victories He would achieve and the blessings He would bestow, this picture is dark with His rejection and the disastrous consequences which it would entail. The chapter opens with a vivid description of these consequences, ver. 1—3. The desolating scourge, approaching as it ever did from the north, overthrows the pride of Lebanon and Bashan, ver. 1, 2, and then, sweeping southward down the Jordan valley, falls upon the shepherds of Israel, ver. 3. The causes which led to this judgment are treated of in the next paragraph, ver. 4—14. In obedience to the command of Jehovah, ver. 4, the charge of the flock, which had been impiously slaughtered and sold by former shepherds, ver. 5, whom God in His displeasure had suffered to maltreat them, ver. 6, is undertaken by a good shepherd, whom the prophet personates, and who endeavours to restore the comeliness and unity of the flock, ver. 7, and to cut off its oppressors, ver. 8a. Wearied, however, and disgusted with the want of sympathy which he encounters, the shepherd relinquishes his thankless task, ver. 8b—11. He asks for his wages, as his work was finished, and receives the paltry and insulting purchase-money of a slave, ver. 12, which at the bidding of Jehovah he casts away in scorn, ver. 13, and completes the abandonment of the work which he had undertaken, ver. 14. Then, in the remaining paragraph, or sub-section, of the chapter, ver. 15—17, the prophet is directed to assume a new and opposite character, and to personate a foolish shepherd, ver. 15, whose neglect and cruelty should fall heavily on the flock, ver. 16, but whom terrible vengeance should ultimately overtake, ver. 17.

1. *Open thy doors, O Lebanon*] The passage is highly poetical and dramatic, but in its first reference literal and physical. In the path of the invading army stands Lebanon, at once the pride and bulwark

Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty 2
are spoiled:
Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage
is come down.
There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their 3
glory is spoiled:
A voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of
Jordan is spoiled.

of the land. As the priestly herald of the approaching host (*quasi esset Dei fetialis*, Calv.), the prophet summons it to open wide an access, and to surrender to the reckless torch of the fierce foe its goodly pines and noble cedars. Comp. 2 Kings xix. 23; Is. xxxvii. 24, xiv. 8.

2. *fir tree*] or cypress. It is uncertain what tree is meant. See *Dict. of Bible*, Art. "Cypress."

for the cedar is fallen] Grand trees as were the firs, or cypresses, the cedars were grander still. The fall therefore of the latter might well make the former howl in despair at their own assured fate. "Nam si cedris haud parcitur, aliis arboribus, quæ minoris quam illæ pretii sunt, multo minus parcetur." Rosenm.

the mighty] i.e. *the mighty trees*, "præstantes scil. arbores, cedri," Rosenm., who compares, "a *goodly* cedar," Ezek. xvii. 23, where the Heb. word is the same. Possibly, however (especially as the clause is additional or parenthetical and mars the symmetry of the parallelism), it is thrown in to suggest the figurative or allegorical reference to the rulers and chiefs of Israel which lies behind and goes together with the literal reference. *The goodly ones*, R. V.

Bashan] Compare the association of "Gilead and Lebanon," chap. x. 10. "From the heights of Lebanon the destructive storm sweeps down on the land of Bashan, and the oaks, the pride of the land (with their kindly shade from the burning heat), are likewise felled by the enemy to meet the wants of the invading army, and to construct his means of offence and defence." Wright.

forest of the vintage] Rather, inaccessible forest.

3. *There is a voice*] More literally and forcibly, *A voice of the howling of the shepherds!* R. V.

the shepherds] Here again the figurative reference appears through the literal. Comp. x. 3, and ver. 5 below. But the literal reference holds good. "The desolating storm sweeps from the highlands to the lowlands. The very shepherds are forced to howl, because their splendour is laid waste, namely, the pasture lands, in which they were wont to tend and feed their flocks in the days of peace and quiet. The conflagration extends even to the south of the land. Judah is wrapped in flames. The close thickets which fringed the Jordan river as it ran along through the territory of the southern kingdom are consumed by the fire.... 'The pride of Jordan' is rendered desolate, and hence the voice of the roaring of lions is heard wailing over the general ruin." Wright.

young lions] Comp. Jer. xxv. 36—38, xlix. 19.

4 Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter;
5 Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty:
And they that sell them say, Blessed *be* the LORD; for I am rich:
And their own shepherds pity them not.
6 For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD:
But lo, I *will* deliver the men
Every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king:
And they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver *them*.
7 And I will feed the flock of slaughter, *even* you, O poor of the flock.

ver. **4—14**. The rejection by them of Jehovah's shepherd is the cause of the calamity which is to fall upon them. "Subjicit rationem cur Deus tam severe agere cogitet cum populo suo, quoniam insanabilis sit eorum malitia." Rosenm.

4. *Feed*] The person addressed is Zechariah. The passage is dramatic. The prophet is represented as personating, inclusively perhaps, as is so generally the case in O. T. prophecy, the long line of Jehovah's true shepherds, but chiefly and ultimately the Good Shepherd of whom they all were types. Compare, as illustrating the rejection alike of the whole typical order and of the Antitype, St Stephen's words: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers." Acts vii. 52. "Hic autem non recitat propheta simpliciter quale mandatum ipse acceperit a Deo: sed in genere docet semper Deum officio boni et fidi pastoris defunctum fuisse erga Judæos. Suscipit igitur propheta in se personam omnium prophetarum." Calv.

flock of the slaughter] Rather, **of slaughter**, R. V., i.e. *exposed to slaughter*, as ver. 5 explains. Comp. Ps. xliv. 22, where "sheep for the slaughter," or "sheep appointed to be slain" (P. B. V.) is literally, "sheep of slaughter."

5. *possessors*] Rather, **buyers**. The flock of which the prophet was commanded to take charge had been bought and slain without compunction, and sold for gain, with a complacent "bless the Lord" at the good price they fetched.

6. *the men*] Rather, **man**. This verse at once gives the reason of the misery described in ver. 5, viz. Jehovah's displeasure, and interprets the parable of the flock. They of whom I am speaking are "the inhabitants of the land (of Judæa);" they are not sheep but "men." Comp. Ezek. xxxiv. 31.

7. *And I will feed*] Rather, **So I fed**, in accordance with the

And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. Three 8
shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul lothed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will 9
not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff, *even* Beauty, and cut 10
it asunder, that *I* might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: 11
and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that

command given me in ver. 4. Comp. "and I fed," at the end of this verse.

even you] or, **therefore**: i.e. "So I fed the flock of slaughter: therefore (because I had been commanded to do so, fed I) the poor of the flock." R. V. adopts A. V. margin: *verily the poor of the flock.*

two staves] two, instead of one as on becoming shepherd he would naturally have done, to denote, as the names given them imply, that his twofold aim in discharging his office would be to ensure the comeliness and the unity of the flock. The latter name, "Bands," refers specially to the union between Judah and Israel.

8. *Three shepherds...in one month*] This has been understood to refer either to three historical persons, e.g. Zachariah, Shallum (2 Kings xv. 8, 13) and some third usurper, not mentioned in the history, of the same time, or Antiochus Epiphanes, Antiochus Eupator and Demetrius I., in the time of the Maccabees (though it is difficult to believe that these could have been called *shepherds* of Israel); or else to the three offices of king, priest and prophet. But all these references break down, and it is better to take the words generally, as describing the prompt and vigorous action of Jehovah's shepherd in dealing with the evil shepherds (x. 3), as well as in feeding the flock. "*Mensis unus* hic capitur pro exiguo tempore: *tres* autem pastores significant multos indefinite." Calv.

and my soul lothed them] or, **but**, &c.: *for*, R. V. At this point the prophet begins to describe the failure of his good offices towards the flock, and the mutual antipathy that sprang up between him and them.

10. *the people*] Lit. **the peoples.** This may mean either (1) *the nations of the earth*, in which case the sense will be that the prosperity which the shepherd on assuming office had guaranteed to the flock, and of which his staff "Beauty" was the symbol, was assured to them by a covenant, so to speak, into which he had entered with all nations not to molest them (comp. Hos. ii. 18; Job v. 23): or (2) *the tribes of Israel*, in which sense the word is used Deut. xxxiii. 3; Hos. x. 14.

11. *it was broken*] i.e. the covenant.

the poor of the flock] "The rest were blinded: those who listened to God's word, observed His prophet, waited on him and observed his words, knew from the fulfilment of the beginning, that the whole was God's word." Pusey.

waited upon me] *gave heed unto me*, R. V.

12 it *was* the word of the LORD. And I said unto them, If ye
think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they
13 weighed *for* my price thirty *pieces* of silver. And the LORD
said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price
that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty
pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter *in* the
14 house of the LORD. Then I cut asunder mine other staff,

12. *price*] Rather, **wages**, or *hire*, R. V. This demand is made by the prophet not "in order to try whether the people would submit themselves further to his guidance" (Wright), but to signify the complete abandonment of his office of shepherd. It is as much as to say, "I will be no more your shepherd: give me therefore my wages, that I may go my way." It is further designed to bring out in bold relief the mutual aversion and contempt, that had sprung up between the shepherd and the flock (ver. 8). He asks as one who cares not whether his request be granted: "Give, or forbear." They reply by a gift more insulting than refusal.

forbear] "ne date; q.d. non sum de mercede admodum sollicitus, licet jure mihi debeatur. Exprimit summam indignationem, ut si quis alicui suam ingratitudinem exprobrat." Rosenm.

thirty pieces of silver] The value of a slave. Exod. xxi. 32. Comp. Hos. iii. 2.

13. *Cast it*] "as a thing vile and rejected, as torn flesh was to be cast to dogs (Exod. xxii. 31), or a corpse was cast unburied (Is. xiv. 19), or the dead body of Absalom was cast into the pit (2 Sam. xviii. 17), or the dust of the idol-altars into the brook Kidron by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 12), or the idols to the moles and the bats (Is. ii. 20), or Judah and Israel from the face of God into a strange land (2 Kings xiii. 23); Coniah and his seed, a vessel in which is no pleasure, into a land which they knew not (Jer. xxii. 28), or the rebels against God said, *let us cast away their cords from us* (Ps. ii. 3), or wickedness was cast into the Ephah (Zech. v. 8); once it is added, *for loathing* (Ezek. xvi. 5)." Pusey.

a goodly price] or, *the goodly price*, R. V. This is, of course, ironical.

to the potter in the house of the Lord] *to the potter;* because his business was to make the most worthless of vessels, the last and least "to honour" of those found "in a great house" (2 Tim. ii. 20), and thus the unworthiness of the "price" was shewn, as being only deserving of such a destiny. *In the house of the Lord:* both because He it was who, whether in the person of His servants or of His Son, was the real subject of the insulting valuation, and also because a formal and national character was given to the transaction, by its thus taking place before Jehovah and in His House. This explanation, which seems to be the simplest and most satisfactory, of this confessedly difficult passage, does not necessarily involve the supposition that the potter was in the house of the Lord, when the pieces of silver were cast contemptuously down there. It is enough if, in the vision or

even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the 15
instruments of a foolish shepherd.

For lo, I *will* raise up a shepherd in the land, 16
Which shall not visit those that be cut off,
Neither shall seek the young one,
Nor heal that that is broken,
Nor feed that that standeth still:
But he shall eat the flesh of the fat,
And tear their claws in pieces.

symbolical action of Zechariah, they were in some way clearly declared to be for him.

Like the earlier prophecy of the King (ix. 9), this prophecy of the Shepherd is remarkable for its literal fulfilment. The "thirty pieces of silver" were literally the "goodly price" paid for Him, "whom they of the children of Israel did value. "The potter" was literally the recipient of it, as the purchase-money of his exhausted field for an unclean purpose (Matt. xxvii. 5—10).

14. *I cut asunder mine other staff*] to signify both the completion of the rupture between the shepherd and the flock, with which he had now nothing more whatever to do, and also the second evil consequence of that rupture, which would befall the flock. Its beauty was gone already: its unity would now be gone also.

15—17. The foolish shepherd, ver. 15; the misery he inflicts upon the flock, ver. 16; and his doom, ver. 17.

15. *the instruments of a foolish shepherd*] There is no reason to suppose that "the instruments," the staff and scrip, of a foolish shepherd differed from those of a wise one, and so in themselves indicated his character. The command is: "Again take to thee (as thou didst before, ver. 7) the instruments of a shepherd, (but this time let him be) a foolish one." The punishment of rejecting the Good Shepherd was to be not only the loss of Him, but the substitution of an evil shepherd in His place.

16. *cut off*] i. e. *destroyed*, or *lost*. See ver. 9, and comp. Exod. xxiii. 23. "Pastores seduli requirunt siquid est perditum, vel siquid evanuit in grege: et hoc intelligit Zacharias per visitationem." Calvin.

the young one] Rather, **the scattered**, lit. *the dispersion*. τὸ ἐσκορπισμένον, LXX. *dispersum*, Jerome.

feed that that standeth still] Rather, **nourish that that standeth (firm)**. τὸ ὁλόκληρον. LXX. *that which is sound*, R. V. Pusey compares the petition in the Litany, "that it may please Thee to strengthen such as do stand." Another view is that they that stand, are the sheep which stand still, unable through weakness and weariness to go forward. But the word seems always to be used of standing firmly, not of coming to a stand-still through infirmity.

claws] Rather, **hoofs**. Like a voracious man, who not content with

17 Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock!
The sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye:
His arm shall be clean dried up,
And his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

eating the flesh of the fat, tears to pieces and sucks the goodness out of the very hoofs. "Videtur *diffringere ungulas* esse hominis voracis, ipsas ungulas frangentis et exsudentis." Maurer. For a like picture both of neglect of duty and of cruelty in a shepherd see Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

17. *idol shepherd*] Rather, **worthless shepherd**: lit. *shepherd of nothingness*, or *worthlessness*. Comp. "physicians of no value," Job xiii. 4.

leaveth the flock] Comp. John x. 12.

the sword] To be taken perhaps metaphorically of punishment or visitation: "per gladium quamlibet speciem pœnæ designat." Calv. The particular kind of punishment then follows, in the withering of the arm and blinding of the eye.

THE SECOND BURDEN. Chaps. xii.—xiv. Like the First Burden of the Word of Jehovah, this Second extends over three chapters and contains two chief sections or prophecies. Of these the first reaches from xii. 1 to xiii. 6; the second is comprised in the remainder of the Book.

The First Section contains three subdivisions, viz. Jehovah's protection of His people from their enemies, xii. 1—9; their penitent sorrow for sin, xii. 10—14; their worthy fruits of repentance, xiii. 1—6.

CHAP. XII. 1—9. JEHOVAH'S PROTECTION OF HIS PEOPLE.

As in the former Burden, the first section opens with a general Title (printed as such in R. V.), very similar to that of the First Burden (ix. 1), and belonging like that to the whole group of prophecies which follow. The coming oracle proceeds from Jehovah, the Creator of the universe and of man; able therefore to accomplish what He predicts, ver. 1. All nations shall gather against Jerusalem, which shall prove to them like a cup of which they drink but to totter and fall, ver. 2, or a heavy stone which only wounds and crushes those who essay to lift it, ver. 3. Horse and rider alike in the armies that gather against her shall be panic-stricken and blinded, ver. 4, while the rulers of the country shall acknowledge her, thus rendered by God impregnable, as the bulwark of their land, ver. 5, and shall take courage to attack and consume the discomfited foe around her walls, so that she stands forth again a free and populous city, ver. 6. Thus the country at large shall have its share from God in the glory of the victory, and so all rivalry between it and the capital shall be excluded, ver. 7. The capital, however, shall under the protection of the Almighty be worthy of its position as the abode of heroes, while the royal family shall lead the nation no less worthily than the Angel of Jehovah did of old time, ver. 8. And all this, because God Himself will make it His aim to destroy all the enemies of His people, ver. 9.

The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, 12
Which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth,
And formeth the spirit of man within him.
Behold, I *will* make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about,
When they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

1. *The burden*] See ch. ix. 1, note.

for Israel] Rather, **concerning Israel.**

saith] Rather, **the saying, oracular utterance, of Jehovah: as in** Ps. cx. 1. The clause is in apposition with the first clause of the verse.

which stretcheth forth, &c.] In view of the wonderful and almost incredible promises that follow, an appeal is made to the creative power of Jehovah, that so the people may not "stagger at the promise of God through unbelief," but be "fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is able also to perform."

2. *cup of trembling*] Rather, **bowl of reeling.** The word is used of the bowl or bason in which the blood of the Paschal lamb was caught, Exod. xii. 22, of the bowls used in the Temple service, 1 Kings vii. 50, and more generally, 2 Sam. xvii. 28. Jerusalem stands forth like some vast bowl or bason, round which all nations gather, eager to swallow down its inviting contents. But the draft proves to be far other than they anticipated, and they reel and stagger back from it, confused and discomfited. A similar figure, though of a "cup" (a different Hebrew word), occurs frequently elsewhere, e.g. Ps. lxxv. 8; Is. li. 17, 22; Jer. li. 7.

people] *peoples,* R. V., and so in ver. 3, 4, 6.

when they shall be in the siege, &c.] This is a clause of considerable difficulty. The rendering in the text of A. V. cannot be maintained. That in the margin is, as Pusey remarks, "too elliptical." The same may, with him, be said of the rendering which has found supporters both in ancient and modern times, *and also upon Judah shall it be* (*to be,* or *to fight*) *in the siege against Jerusalem;* i. e. either "it shall happen to Judah" voluntarily, through civil war, or (since that idea is absolutely contradicted by the full alliance and agreement between Judah and Jerusalem described in ver. 5, 6), "it shall be incumbent upon Judah," because he shall be compelled against his will by the invading nations to join them, to take part in the siege. Pusey's own rendering, which is that adopted in R. V., is, "And also upon Judah will it be in the siege against Jerusalem, i. e. the burden of the word of the Lord, which was upon Israel, should be upon Judah." The objection to this is that the reference to the beginning of ver. 1 for a subject to the verb "it shall be" is remote and confusing. On the whole it is perhaps best to render, "And also on (or over) Judah it

3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome
stone for all people:
All that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces,
Though all the people of the earth be gathered together
against it.
4 In that day, saith the LORD,
I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider
with madness:
And I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah,
And will smite every horse of the people with blind-
ness.
5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart,
The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength
In the LORD of hosts their God.

(i.e. the protection and deliverance implied in the first clause of the verse) shall be, in the siege," &c. Signal as was the deliverance of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah, it did not extend beyond the city itself (2 Kings xviii. 13; Is. xxxvi. 1). Now the country at large should share in the deliverance of the capital.

3. *a burdensome stone*] because, as it immediately follows, it proves too heavy for every one who attempts to lift it, and slipping from his grasp wounds and lacerates him. There may possibly be a reference to the custom, if indeed it existed so early as the time of Zechariah, which Jerome describes as prevailing in Palestine in his days. "It is the custom," he says, "in the cities of Palestine, and to the present day throughout all Judæa the ancient practice is observed, that in villages, towns and forts round stones of very great weight are placed, at which the youth are wont to exercise themselves, and according to their differing strength to lift them, some to the knees, others to the navel, others to the shoulders and head; some exhibiting the greatness of their strength, raise the weight above their head with both their hands straight up."

cut in pieces] *sore wounded*, R. V.

4. *astonishment*] This and the two following words, *madness*, *blindness*, occur together also in Deut. xxviii. 28, in a description of God's judgments upon Israel, as here upon the armies that gather against Jerusalem.

I will open mine eyes upon] i.e. will regard with favour. Comp. Ps. xxxii. 8.

5. *the governors*] *chieftains*, R. V., and so in ver. 6.

shall be] Rather, are. When they see the rout and discomfiture of her enemies around the walls of Jerusalem (ver. 2—4), the rulers of the land, speaking as the mouthpiece of the people at large, shall joyfully acknowledge her to be the strength of the country by the help of Jehovah, her God.

In that day will I make the governors of Judah like a 6
hearth of fire among the wood,
And like a torch of fire in a sheaf;
And they shall devour all the people round about, on the
right hand and on the left:
And Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place,
even in Jerusalem.
The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, 7
That the glory of the house of David
And the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem
Do not magnify *themselves* against Judah.
In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of 8
Jerusalem;
And he that is feeble among them at that day shall be
as David;

6. *a hearth*] Rather, **pan.** The word is used in 1 Sam. ii. 14 of a "pan," or cooking vessel. Elsewhere it is a bason or laver, Exod. xxx. 18, 28; 1 Kings vii. 38; and once a pulpit or platform, 2 Chron. vi. 13. Here the figure would seem to be of a chafing-pan full of fire set among wood or faggots.

in a sheaf] *among sheaves*, R. V.

7. *the tents of Judah first*] The meaning seems to be that when the besiegers shall reel back like drunken men from the walls of Jerusalem (ver. 2), smitten with panic by God (ver. 4), the first to fall upon them and put them to the sword shall be, not the inhabitants of the besieged city by sallying forth from their walls, though they by their gallant and successful defence had rightly been regarded as the bulwark of the whole land (ver. 5), but the inhabitants of the open country, who shall have the honour of consuming their adversaries (ver. 6), and so of saving first themselves and then the capital, which as the result of their prowess shall be completely delivered.

that the glory, &c.] The human agents are to have each their due share of honour. (Comp. ver. 5.) But to God alone the glory really belongs. "I will make," ver. 2, 3, 6; "I will smite," ver. 4; "Jehovah shall save," ver. 7. Compare "my strength in Jehovah of hosts, their God," ver. 5. "Sensus est, gloriam victi hostis non penes Hierosolymitanos futuram, quippe post superatum demum hostem ex urbe exituros, sed penes Judam, qui supra ver. 6 dicebatur ignis instar hostes circumquaque absumturus; aut penes ipsum potius Jovam, qui hostes amentia et cæcitate percusserit (ver. 4), Judam vero robore induerit ad hostes jamjam confusos ulterius debellandos." Rosenm.

* *do not magnify themselves*] *be not magnified*, R. V.

8. *he that is feeble...as David*] But this foremost action on the part of Judah shall not argue any pusillanimity on the part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. To them too shall the protection of Jehovah extend. Even the weak among them (comp. 1 Sam. ii. 4, where the

And the house of David *shall be* as God,
As the angel of the LORD before them.
9 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That I will seek to destroy all the nations
That come against Jerusalem.
10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
The spirit of grace and of supplications:

word here rendered "feeble" is put in contrast to a hero or mighty man) shall be valiant as David.

the house of David] While the inhabitants of Jerusalem at large shall be thus strengthened and ennobled, the royal house (comp. Is. vii. 13) shall maintain its supremacy.

as the angel, &c.] Comp. Exod. xiv. 19, xxiii. 20; Acts vii. 38.

9. *I will seek*] i.e. *I will make it my aim*, upon which I am intent, and which I will carry out. It is true, as Mr Wright points out, that in the only other passage in which this phrase is used of Almighty God, the intention, though "manifested clearly and distinctly," was abandoned (Exod. iv. 24). But it does not follow that "this passage is not an absolute promise of the utter destruction of the nations," but only a promise conditional upon the future conduct of the Jews. The passage as a whole is quite against such a supposition. The verse would be a strange anti-climax, if after such promises as are contained in ver. 2—8 it only asserted, "My aim shall be to do all this that I have promised in glowing terms; but all may be frustrated and come to nought through the unfaithfulness of man."

10—14. THE PENITENT SORROW OF THE PEOPLE FOR SIN.

The conversion (xii. 10—14) and moral reformation (xiii. 1—6) of the people shall accompany their deliverance from their enemies (xii. 1—9). On the royal house and the royal city first God will pour out His Spirit, and as the consequence they shall regard Him, whom they have pierced and wounded by their sins, with the deepest sorrow and bitterness of soul, ver. 10. The mourning in Jerusalem shall be such as to recall that which was occasioned by the great national calamity of the death of Josiah in battle, ver. 11. But the outpouring of the Spirit and the penitent grief called forth by it shall extend to the whole nation, so that every family throughout the land, the sexes apart, shall form itself into a separate group of mourners, ver. 12—14.

10. *I will pour*] The word denotes the abundance of the effusion. Comp. Joel ii. 28 [Heb., iii. 1]. "Quod verbum doni largitatem et copiam indicat." Rosenm.

the house of David, &c.] Because they, restored to their proper place and dignity (ver. 8), are as it were the head of the nation. But from the head the holy unction shall flow to the whole body ("*the land*," ver. 12). Comp Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

the spirit of grace and of supplications] i.e. the Spirit which conveys

And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,
And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*,
And shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.
In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jeru- 11
salem,
As the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

grace and calls forth supplications. The word "grace" is not here used in its primary sense of the favour of God towards man, but in that secondary sense, with which readers of the N. T. are familiar, of the effects of that favour in man, by the gifts and influences of the Holy Spirit. See John i. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 10; and for the expression, "the Spirit of grace," Heb. x. 29, where, as Dean Alford shews, the second member of the "alternative very neatly put by Anselm; *Spiritui sancto gratis dato, vel gratiam danti*," is to be accepted.

upon me whom they have pierced] *unto me*, R. V. The Speaker is Almighty God. The Jews had pierced Him metaphorically by their rebellion and ingratitude throughout their history. They pierced Him, literally and as the crowning act of their contumacy, in the Person of His Son upon the Cross, John xix. 37. Comp. Rev. i. 7. "Confixerant ergo Deum Judæi quum mærore afficerent ejus Spiritum. Sed Christus etiam secundum carnem ab illis transfixus fuit. Et hoc intelligit Joannes, visibili isto symbolo Deum palam fecisse non se tantum olim fuisse indigne provocatum a Judæis; sed in persona unigeniti Filii sui tandem cumulum fuisse additum scelestæ impietati, quod ne Christi quidem lateri pepercerint." Calv. There is no sufficient ground for adopting with Ewald and others the reading, *upon him*.

his only son] Comp. Jer. vi. 26; Amos viii. 10.

11. *Hadadrimmon*] This is generally supposed, on the authority of Jerome, to have been a city near Jezreel, called in his day Maximinianopolis, in the valley of Megiddo, and the place where Josiah was fatally wounded by Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt. Both accounts of Josiah's death state that it was "at," or "in the valley of" Megiddo, that his wound was received (2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22), while the fuller account in the Book of Chronicles not only affirms the national character of the mourning for him at the time, "all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah," but informs us that the prophet Jeremiah, probably in some dirge composed for the occasion, "lamented for him," and that the anniversary of his death long continued to be observed as a day of national calamity. "All the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and (they) made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold they are written in the lamentations." "The grief of the people at the fall of their brave and pious king at the

12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart;
The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart;
The family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;
13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart;
The family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;
14 All the families that remain,
Every family apart, and their wives apart.

age of thirty-nine years was extraordinarily deep. It seemed as though a gloomy foreboding would take possession of their minds that his fall really involved that of the realm itself, of which he had been the last great prop. Long years after, the elegies composed on him by Jeremiah, and sung among the people, were still preserved, and were repeated with a sad pleasure on the days set apart for the commemoration of the royal hero." Ewald.

12, 13. *David...Nathan...Levi...Shimei*] Two families are singled out, the kingly and the priestly, as examples of the rest. And in each case, to shew the pervading character of the grief, the family or tribe is first described by its general and inclusive name, and then one branch of it is mentioned, to indicate that to every part and division the wide-spread mourning shall extend. "This sorrow should be universal but also individual, the whole land, and that family by family; the royal family in the direct line of its kings, and in a branch from Nathan, a son of David and whole brother of Solomon (1 Chron. iii. 5), which was continued on in private life, yet was still to be an ancestral line of Jesus (Luke iii. 31); in like way the main priestly family from Levi, and a subordinate line from a grandson of Levi, *the family of Shimei* (Num. iii. 21); and all the remaining families, each with their separate sorrow, each according to Joel's call (ii. 16), *let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber and the bride out of her closet*, each denying himself the tenderest solaces of life." Pusey.

The prophecy began to be fulfilled, so soon as the actual piercing had taken place, when "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." (Luke xxiii. 48.) The fulfilment was continued on the day of Pentecost, when those to whom it was said, "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ, were pricked in their heart." (Acts ii. 36, 37.) It has gone on ever since; but it awaits a larger and more exact realisation, when all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. xi. 26.)

CHAP. XIII. 1—6. WORTHY FRUITS OF REPENTANCE.

The mourning for sin thus produced and exhibited (xii. 10—14)

In that day there shall be a fountain opened 13
To the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
For sin and for uncleanness.
And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of 2
hosts,
That I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land,

shall be the precursor of cleansing from sin, for which ample and lasting provision shall be made, ver. 1; and of amendment of life. Idolatry and superstition shall be banished and forgotten, ver. 2. If any one shall venture to play the false prophet, his own parents shall be the first to inflict on him the prescribed penalty of death, ver. 3. So dangerous and suspected will the prophetic office become, that the false prophets will be ashamed and afraid to avow their calling and assume their garb, ver. 4. They will profess themselves, when questioned, to have been simple hinds from their youth, ver. 5; and if the charge against them be enforced by an appeal to the wounds on their bodies, as proofs of the idolatrous rites which they have practised, or of the punishment which has already overtaken them as false prophets, they will seek to meet it by an evasive and misleading reply, ver. 6.

1. *In that day*] The day, or period, so often mentioned before (xii. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11), in which this whole prophecy shall be fulfilled.

a fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness] The form of the promise is Jewish, the substance Christian. For the lustral waters of the Law, the "water of sin" (Num. viii. 7) and the "water of uncleanness" (Num. xix. 9, where the word is the same as here, though rendered, "water of separation," A. V. and R. V.), which were contained and renewed in bowl or laver, and which did but "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," shall be substituted the living fountain of the Gospel, opened once but remaining open ever (comp. *θύρα ἠνεῳγμένη* Rev. iv. 1), which "purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 13, 14; 1 John i. 7.)

2. *I will cut off*] Forgiveness (ver. 1) is the middle term between godly sorrow (xii. 10—14) and amendment (xiii. 2—6). It has been argued that the sins which are here said to be abandoned were not the prevalent sins of the Jews after the captivity, and that therefore the prophecy must be assigned to an earlier date. But the fact that this was the case, so far as it is a fact, may be claimed as completing the then present and historical basis, on which Zechariah, writing after the captivity, grounded, as is the wont of the O. T. prophets. the greater future which he was commissioned to reveal. Jerusalem had already proved and should presently prove again to be a "bowl of reeling," and a "burdensome stone" (xiii. 2, 3) to the enemies who sought to hinder the re-building of the Temple and city. (Ezra vi. 6, 7, 11, 12; Neh. iv., vi.) Already "the spirit of grace and of supplications" had been poured upon the people and had moved them to penitent sorrow for their sins (Jer. l. 4, 5), and throughout the era of the return it

And they shall no more be remembered:
And also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit
to pass out of the land.
3 And it shall come to pass, *that* when any shall yet prophesy,
Then his father and his mother that begat him shall say
unto him, Thou shalt not live;
For thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD:
And his father and his mother that begat him shall
thrust him through when he prophesieth.
4 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his
vision, when he hath prophesied;
Neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

should in like manner be poured upon them. (Ezra ix., x. 1; Neh. viii. 9, ix.) Already had they set themselves to "cut off the names of the idols," and to "cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land." (Ezra vi. 21, x. 2—44; Neh. ix. 38, x. 28—30, xiii. 1—9, 23—31.) But all these things, the prophet assures them, are but as the scanty drops, the harbingers of the abundant shower, or the few ripe ears, the firstfruits of the plentiful harvest. In the coming age of Messiah, the King (chap. ix.) and Shepherd (chap. xi.) of Israel, when the Spirit shall indeed be poured from on high, and the true Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, the spiritual counterparts of deliverance, of penitence, of amendment shall flourish in the Church of Christ. (Comp. as regards the terms of this verse, "idols," "prophets," "unclean spirit," 1 John v. 21, iv. 1). But beyond that is another age, in which in all its particulars, and with a completeness, it may be, and exactness of detail which it had never before attained to, the whole prediction shall be fulfilled.

the unclean spirit] Comp. 1 Kings xxii. 22.

3. *his father and his mother*] In holy zeal they would carry out the law, "thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death." Deut. xiii. 6, 9.

4. *shall be ashamed*] Pusey compares Acts xix. 18—20.

hath prophesied] Rather, **prophesieth**, as R. V.

a rough garment] Lit. **a cloak of hair**: *a hairy mantle*. R. V. The word for *cloak*, or *cape*, is that used for the *mantle* of Elijah (1 Kings xix. 13, 19; 2 Kings ii. 13, 14), "the cape or wrapper, which, with the exception of a strip of skin or leather round his loins, formed, as we have every reason to believe, his sole garment." *Bibl. Dict.*, Art. Mantle. This cloak or cape was either woven of camels' hair or was perhaps a sheep's skin (μηλωτήν LXX. Comp. 2 Kings i. 8; Gen. xxv. 25; Matt. iii. 4). It would seem from this passage that it had been worn by succeeding prophets in imitation of Elijah, and so had come to be regarded as the badge of a prophet.

But he shall say, I *am* no prophet, I *am* a husbandman; 5
For man taught me *to keep cattle* from my youth.
And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in 6
thine hands?
Then he shall answer, *Those with* which I was wounded
in the house of my friends.

5. *a husbandman*] Lit. **one tilling the ground**, as Gen. iv. 2. Comp. Amos vii. 14, where however there is no repudiation as here of the prophetical office.

taught me to keep cattle] **or possessed me as a serf, or chattel**: *adscriptus glebæ. I have been made a bondman*, R. V.

6. *wounds in thine hands*] Lit. **between thy hands**; i. e. probably, on thy breast: *between thine arms*, R. V. Comp. "between his arms," i. e. in his back, 2 Kings ix. 24; "between your eyes," i. e. on your foreheads, Deut. xi. 18. The interrogator, in his zeal against false prophets, is still unsatisfied, and detecting wounds, or scars, on the breast of the quondam false prophet, charges them upon him as proofs of his guilt, because he regards them either as self-inflicted in the service of idols (1 Kings xviii. 28), or as given him by his parents, from whose righteous indignation he had escaped wounded, when they went about to kill him (ver. 3).

in the house of my friends] If this be a confession of guilt, we must understand it to mean that the accused person now admits the charge brought against him in the second of the two forms suggested in the last note: "Yes, it is true that I did play the false prophet, and this is the merited punishment which those who loved me inflicted on me." "Hæc vulnera et has accepi plagas parentum meorum judicio condemnatus, et eorum qui me non oderant sed amabant. Et in tantum, fugato mendacio, veritas obtinebit, ut etiam ipse, qui suo punitus est vitio, recte perpessum se esse fateatur." Hieron. The "lovers" cannot mean the false gods or idols, in whose service it might have been supposed that he had been wounded. Such gods or idols are indeed appropriately called the "lovers," or paramours, of the Jewish Church as a whole, which is regarded as the bride or spouse of Jehovah (Hos. ii. 7, 10, 12; Ezek. xvi. 33, 36, 37); but the figure is quite inadmissible in the case of an individual prophet. Those who do not regard this clause of the verse as a confession of guilt see in it either an allusion to the loving though severe discipline of youth, or an evasive answer which is purposely indefinite and obscure.

The reference which Dr Pusey and others have seen in this verse to our Lord and to the prints of the nails in His hands is in a high degree forced and arbitrary. It cannot possibly be reconciled with the preceding context, with which the verse intimately coheres. "Quidam hoc traxerunt ad Christum," writes Calvin, "quia dicit Zacharias manibus inflicta esse vulnera; sed illud est nimis frivolum, quia satis constat sermonem prosequi de falsis doctoribus, qui abusi fuerant Dei nomine ad tempus."

The Second Section. XIII. 7—XIV. 21.

THE PURIFICATION AND FINAL GLORY OF ISRAEL.

This Second Section of the Second Burden and conclusion of the whole Book describes the purifying chastisement that shall come upon the people, xiii. 7—9; the great final conflict and deliverance of Jerusalem, xiv. 1—7; the prosperity of the transformed and renovated city and land, Jehovah being King, 8—11; the destruction of the hostile nations, 12—15, and homage of the residue, 16—19; and the perfect holiness of Jerusalem, as the crown of all, 20, 21.

XIII. 7—9. THE PURIFYING CHASTISEMENT.

The smiting of the Shepherd shall lead to the dispersion of the flock, which shall not, however, be universal, ver. 7; for while two-thirds of it shall perish, one-third shall be spared, ver. 8, and shall be brought by the refining process of affliction into happy and intimate relationship with God, ver. 9.

The opening of the section is apparently abrupt, and Ewald and other critics would accordingly transfer these verses to the end of chap. xi. The difficulty cannot satisfactorily be removed by the view (adopted by Mr Wright) that in the preceding verses (2—6) "much more is described than a sound reaction against the pretences of false prophets," and that "the age is represented as impatient of any such supernatural claims," a temper of mind, which is held to have been precisely that which led the Jews of that day to reject the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, and so to become the authors of the smiting of the Shepherd. Such a view mars the sequence of the foregoing prophecy, the deliverance, the penitence, the cleansing, the amendment, and moreover it was not because He claimed to be a prophet, nor because they were impatient of any such claim (for they both expected and recognised it, John i. 21, vi. 14, ix. 17; Luke vii. 16, xxiv. 19; Matt. xxi. 4, 6; comp. Matt. xiv. 5), but because "He made Himself the Son of God" (John xix. 7), that the Jews took their part in the smiting of the Shepherd. The true explanation of the apparently abrupt transition is to be found in the fact that this section is rather parallel with, than consecutive upon the earlier section of this burden. (Comp. the parallel series of visions, the seals, the trumpets, the vials, in the Apocalypse.) Having opened the future in the first section up to the great moral reformation of the end, the prophet now turns back again to a point even earlier than that with which that section commenced, and opens it again by a new vista from the smiting of the Shepherd to the same goal of perfect holiness which he had reached before. At the same time he guards against the mistake, which the promises of the earlier section might have fostered, that the goal was to be reached without discipline. "Adhuc bona et jucunda prædixit vates. Ne autem qui hæc legerent in hanc inducerentur opinionem, populi Judaici conditionem futuris temporibus fore immunem ab omni molestia et calamitate, jam annunciat priusquam Jova populum suum repurget atque revocat in perfectum ordinem, gravissimas clades fore intermedias." Rosenm. At the same time, there may possibly be such a connection

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow,
Saith the LORD of hosts:
Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: 7

of thought between ver. 6, 7, as is suggested by Stier (*Reden Jesu*, Matt. xxvi. 31). "There is a *transition* in the parallel of 'wounds' and 'wounded' of ver. 6, with the 'wound' ('smite,' the same root) of ver. 7, which signifies—In a quite different sense 'will the *true* Prophet and Shepherd *suffer* for the guilt of others: let Himself be smitten by them who hate Him, because He loves them.'"

7. *Awake, O sword*] We have a similar apostrophe in Jer. xlvii. 6.

my shepherd] This may refer primarily to any Jewish king or ruler, for even a heathen king raised up by God to befriend His people is called by Him "My shepherd," Is. xliv. 28. But it is at the same time a distinct prophecy of Christ. See chap. xi. 4, note.

my fellow] The word occurs only here and in Leviticus, where it is frequently found (e.g. vi. 2 [Heb., v. 21]; xix. 15, 17), and is usually rendered, "neighbour," ὁ πλησίον, LXX. In its highest sense it belongs exclusively to the Shepherd who could say, "I and my Father are one." John x. 26—30.

True to the sound canon of interpretation which he always adopts, Calvin, while fully acknowledging the reference of this passage to Christ and its complete fulfilment in Him, contends that just as the prediction of "a prophet" in Deuteronomy (xviii. 15) embraces the whole prophetical order, as well as "the Prophet" to whom they all gave witness, so here, while the Chief Shepherd is distinctly pointed at, the shepherds of God's people generally are included, and called His "fellows," because they are associated with Him in the work of government. "Sicuti ergo Christus primatum obtinet inter prophetas, et ideo bene aptatur ad illum locus Mosis; ita etiam quoniam pastorum est princeps et caput, merito hoc competit in ejus personam. Sed generalis tamen est prophetæ doctrina..... Hæc ratio est cur vocentur socii Dei, propter conjunctionem scilicet, quia sunt co-operarii Dei, quemadmodum Paulus etiam docet (1 Cor. iii. 9). Denique eodem sensu vocat propheta pastores Dei socios, quo Paulus vocat ipsos συνεργούς." In applying this canon, however, to the prophecies of the O. T. it must be borne in mind that, as the stars grow pale before the rising sun, so as the coming of Christ draws near, typical persons and offices fade more and more out of sight, and the terms and reference of the promises belong more immediately and exclusively to Him.

the sheep shall be scattered] In interpreting this prophecy of His own death and its consequences, our Lord seems to restrict the "sheep" here to the Apostles, of whom we are told that, when He was apprehended, they all "forsook Him and fled" (Matt. xxvi. 31, 56). We may say, with Bengel, that "the disciples were the representatives of the whole flock (instar totius gregis) which should afterwards be ga-

And I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.
8 And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD,
Two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die;
But the third shall be left therein.
9 And I will bring the third *part* through the fire,
And will refine them as silver is refined,
And will try them as gold is tried:
They shall call on my name, and I will hear them:
I will say, It *is* my people:
And they shall say, The LORD *is* my God.

thered by them." But with Zechariah the flock is the *Jewish* Church, and it is better therefore to regard our Lord's words as intimating the completeness of the dispersion which the prophet had foretold. Not only the flock at large, which had rejected Him as their shepherd, but even His own sheep, the faithful poor ("the poor of the flock," chap. xi. 11; the "little ones" of this verse) shall be scandalized at first and flee away from the Cross.

I will turn mine hand upon] For correction, but in mercy, ver. 8, 9. Comp. Is. i. 25, where the phrase is used in the same sense. Stier has some interesting remarks on the reference to this part of the prophecy in our Lord's promise to His disciples in Matt. xxvi. 32. "The hand and power of God in the *risen* Shepherd returned from death is turned upon them and gathers them together."

8. *in all the land*] i.e. of Palestine, which agrees with the view taken above that "the flock" is the Jewish church and people.

two parts] Comp. 2 Sam. viii. 2. This was terribly fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

9. *the third part*] Comp. Rom. xi. 5.

CHAP. XIV. 1—7. THE FINAL CONFLICT AND DELIVERANCE.

All nations shall come against Jerusalem. The city shall be taken, with the attendant horrors of barbarous warfare, and half its population enslaved, ver. 1, 2. Then Jehovah shall appear, as in olden time, to deliver His people, ver. 3. Beneath His feet, as He descends upon the Mount of Olives, the mountain shall cleave asunder, the two parts moving northward and southward, and being separated by a wide valley running east and west, ver. 4. By this valley (which shall reach across the ravine of Kedron up to the city wall) the people that remain shall flee from Jerusalem, as they fled from the earthquake in Uzziah's time. Jehovah shall come with all His holy ones, ver. 5, and this "day of the Lord," unlike all other days and known to Him alone, shall be marked by strange phenomena of mingled light and darkness, and shall have for its evening the dawn of the everlasting day, ver. 6, 7.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, 14
And thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.
For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; 2
And the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished;
And half of the city shall go forth into captivity,
And the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those 3 nations,
As when he fought in the day of battle.
And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of 4 Olives,

1. *the day of the Lord cometh*] Lit. **a day to** (or, **of**) **Jehovah**, **i. e.** which is in a special manner His. The previous prophecy (xiii. 7—9) is now expanded, attention being concentrated, however, on the city rather than on the land (xiii. 8), and on the final act rather than on the long previous process of purifying discipline. It is impossible satisfactorily to adapt the terms of this prophecy, either to the taking of Jerusalem under the Maccabees, or to its destruction by the Romans. As Pusey well remarks, "those who explain it solely of this, are obliged to mingle explanations partly literal, as that Jerusalem should be the earthly Jerusalem which was destroyed, partly metaphorical, as to the mount of Olives, its division into two parts, &c." It should moreover be observed that there is no word here of the city being *destroyed*.

in the midst of thee] So complete shall be the subjugation of the city, that the enemy shall, in perfect security, portion out her spoil amongst the victorious hosts in the very midst of her.

2. *all nations*] Comp. Joel iii. 2, 9—11; Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.; Rev. xx. 7—9.

3. *in the day of battle*] Some, as Calvin, refer this generally to God's manifold interpositions on behalf of His people, throughout the course of their history; but it is better to confine it to the first great typical interposition, when the word of command was, "Jehovah shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace"; and even the enemy was fain to confess, "Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians," Exod. xiv. 14, 25; comp. Habak. iii. 15. A comparison may perhaps be suggested between the dividing of the Red Sea (Ps. cxxxvi. 13), and of the Mount of Olives as here predicted.

4. *the mount of Olives*] Comp. Acts i. 12. "The mount of Olives is the central eminence of a line of hills, of rather more than a mile in length, overhanging the city, from which it is separated only by the narrow bed of the valley of the Brook of Cedron. It rises 187 feet above mount Zion, 295 above mount Moriah, 443 above Gethsemane, and lies between the city and the wilderness toward the Dead Sea." Pusey.

Which *is* before Jerusalem on the east,
And the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof
toward the east and toward the west,
And there shall be a very great valley;
And half of the mountain shall remove toward the north,
And half of it toward the south.
5 And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains;
For the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal:
Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah:
And the LORD my God shall come,
And all the saints with thee.
6 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark:

a very great valley] The cleft in the mountain which is to form this valley will run E. and W., and will be caused by the two parts of the divided mountain moving N. and S.

5. *to the valley of the mountains*] Rather, **by the valley of My mountains**, i. e. a way of escape from the city shall be opened to you along the valley formed by My mountains, those mountains, that is, which I have just made for that very purpose, by cleaving the mount of Olives.

unto Azal] Jerome and others render, *very near*, "usque ad proximum." If, however, Azal is a proper name, it denotes some then familiar locality, either at the eastern extremity of the newly-formed valley, or more probably at its western extremity, close to the walls of Jerusalem. In any case the meaning is that the way of escape shall be made easy.

the earthquake in the days of Uzziah] There is no mention of this in the historical books. The references to it here and in Amos i. 1 show that it made a deep impression on the people and was long remembered. The story of Josephus (see Stanley, *Jewish Church*, II. 439) connecting it with Uzziah's attempt to burn incense (2 Chron. xxvi. 19) is probably only an embellishment of this passage of Zechariah. Ewald puts the earthquake in "one of the first years of Uzziah."

all the saints] Rather, **holy ones**, i. e. angels. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 2; Matt. xxv. 31; Jude 14.

with thee] i.e. with the Lord, to whom the prophet turns in direct address. These abrupt changes of person are not uncommon in Hebrew. See chap. ii. 8, note.

6. *the light shall not be clear, nor dark*] Rather, **there shall not be light, the bright ones shall be contracted**; as in R. V. margin, i.e. the heavenly bodies shall be darkened. It shall be a day of deep gloom. Comp. "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining," Joel iii. 15, and Matt. xxiv. 29; Rev. vi. 12, 13.

But it shall be one day which shall be known to the 7
LORD,
Not day, nor night:
But it shall come to pass, *that* at evening time it shall be
light.
And it shall be in that day, 8
That living waters shall go out from Jerusalem:
Half of them toward the former sea,
And half of them toward the hinder sea:
In summer and in winter shall it be.
And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: 9
In that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

7. *one day*] i.e. an unique day, unlike any other: *prorsus singularis.* Maurer. Comp. Ezek. vii. 5, and for the idea Jer. xxx. 7.

shall be known to the Lord] Rather, **is known,** R. V. Comp. Mk. xiii. 32. "Quo temporis momento ingruet soli Deo est notum." Maurer.

not day nor night] Neither wholly day nor wholly night, but a chequered mixture of both. The new creation shall be ushered in, as the first was, by a day of lurid gloom and "darkness visible," which shall not, however, deepen into night, but brighten at its close into the everlasting dawn. "At evening time there shall be light."

8—11. THE PROSPERITY OF THE LAND.

Perennial streams flowing from Jerusalem both to the E. and to the W. shall irrigate and fertilise the land, ver. 8. One God shall be worshipped without a rival, ver. 9. The whole face of the country shall become a level plain, Jerusalem alone standing aloft on its ancient hills, ver. 10, the populous abode of blessing and security, ver. 11.

8. *former sea,...hinder sea*] Rather, **eastern sea, western sea,** R. V.: i.e. the Dead Sea on the E., and the Mediterranean Sea on the W. Comp. Ezek. xlvii. 1; Joel iii. 18. This would be the natural watershed, the whole country being level and Jerusalem alone elevated above it, ver. 10.

in summer and in winter] "ut aquæ istæ nec gelu constringantur hiemis, nec æstatis nimio fervore siccentur." Hieron. Comp. by way of contrast, Job vi. 15—20.

9. *the earth*] Rather, **the land,** as in ver. 10. The wider scope is virtually included, but is not here directly under consideration.

shall there be one Lord, &c.] Rather, **Jehovah shall be one,** &c., i.e. He shall be one in the recognition and worship of men, as He is unchangeably in His essence and in fact.

and his name one] i.e., as Calvin who discusses this clause at length points out, not only shall one supreme God and fountain as it were of Deity be acknowledged—for many even of the heathen acknowledged that—but His manifold revelations of Himself shall no longer be

10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem:
And it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place,

regarded as so many distinct and inferior deities, but as parts and aspects of the one sole Name by which He makes Himself known to men. Even the Three Persons of the blessed Trinity are included in the One Name. Matt. xxviii. 19.

10. *turned as a plain*] i.e. changed so as to become as, or like, a plain. Some would render, *as the Arabah* (R. V.) or Jordan valley, a meaning which the word will bear. Dean Stanley writes, "As a general rule, Palestine is not merely a mountainous country, but a mass of mountains, rising from a level sea-coast on the west, and from a level desert on the east, only cut asunder by the valley of the Jordan from north to south, and by the valley of Jezreel from east to west. The result of this peculiarity is, that not merely the hill-tops, but the valleys and plains of the interior of Palestine, both east and west, are themselves so high above the level of the sea as to partake of all the main characteristics of mountainous history and scenery. Jerusalem is of nearly the same elevation as the highest ground in England, and most of the chief cities of Palestine are several hundred feet above the Mediterranean Sea." (*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 129; see also p. 170.) The "plain," therefore, which the prophet here pictures to himself, may be a table-mountain or elevated platform, all other hills and mountains sinking down to the present level of the "valleys and plains" of Palestine, and leaving Jerusalem standing aloft on this elevated base, the queen-like city and mistress of the world.

> "See Salem built, the labour of a God!
> Bright as a sun the Sacred City shines;
> All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
> Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
> Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
> And endless her increase."

Geba] A town of Benjamin, Josh. xxi. 17; 1 Chron. vi. 60; Neh. xi. 31. It is spoken of, as it is here, as the northern boundary of the kingdom of Judah, in 2 Kings xxiii. 8. "Exactly in accordance with this (the mention of the position of Geba in 1 Sam. xiii. 3) is the position of the modern village of *Jeba*, which stands picturesquely on the top of its steep-terraced hill, on the very edge of the great *Wady Suweinit*.... Standing as it does on the south bank of this important wady—one of the most striking natural features of this part of the country—the mention of Geba as the northern boundary of the lower kingdom is very significant." *Bible Dict.* Art. "Geba."

Rimmon] A town in the south of Palestine, Josh. xv. 21, 32, allotted to Simeon, *Ib.* xix. 1, 7. Its site is now unknown.

it shall be lifted up] *she shall be lifted up*, R. V., i. e. Jerusalem, which has just been mentioned, shall retain its former elevation, when all the country round has sunk into a plain. "Humiliatis omnibus circumqua-

From Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate,
unto the corner gate,
And *from* the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-
presses.
And *men* shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter 11
destruction;
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.
And this shall be the plague where*with* the LORD will 12
smite all the people
That have fought against Jerusalem;
Their flesh *shall* consume away while they stand upon
their feet,

que montibus collibusque, urbs primaria Judæ totiusque orbis terrarum (ver. 9, cf. Mic. iv. 1), immota suo loco, elata et conspicua mansura dicitur." Maurer.

from Benjamin's gate] These limits cannot be defined with certainty; but it seems probable that "the gate of Benjamin" is identical with "the gate of Ephraim" (2 Kings xiv. 13; Neh. viii. 16, xii. 39), a gate, that is, in the N. wall of the city, which led to the territory of Benjamin and then to that of Ephraim beyond, and which was therefore called indifferently by either name. If we suppose that this gate stood in the middle of the N. wall, we have the breadth of the restored city, measured from it, first westward to "the corner gate" (2 Kings xiv. 13; 2 Chron. xxv. 23; Jer. xxxi. 38), which was at the N.W. corner of the wall, and then eastward to "the first gate" (the same perhaps as that called "the old gate," Neh. xii. 39), which was at the N.E. corner. The length of the city is given, from the tower of Hananeel (Neh. iii. 1, xii. 39; Jer. xxxi. 38) in the N. to "the king's winepresses" in the S. The site of these winepresses has not been discovered, but it is not improbable that they were in or near "the king's garden" (Neh. iii. 15), at the S.E. extremity of the city.

11. *utter destruction*] Lit. **curse.** ἀνάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. LXX. Comp. Rev. xxii. 3.

12—15. THE DESTRUCTION OF HOSTILE NATIONS.

The deliverance and prosperity of Jerusalem shall be accomplished by a terrible plague sent upon those who fought against her, ver. 12; and by a panic which shall cause them to slay one another, ver. 13, and also by the courage and prowess of Judah. The wealth of their enemies shall be the spoil of the Jews, ver. 14; while the consuming pestilence shall extend to all the cattle in the hostile camp, ver. 15.

12. *the people*] Lit. **peoples,** as R. V., i.e. nations.

their flesh] Lit. **his flesh,** i.e. the flesh of each one of them; and so, *his eyes, his tongue;* though, to show that the plague is at once individual and universal, it is at the end of the verse, "in *their* mouth".

while they stand upon their feet] Lit. **and he standing upon his**

And their eyes shall consume away in their holes,
And their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.
13 And it shall come to pass in that day,
That a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them;
And they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour,
And his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.
14 And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem;
And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together,

feet. The plague comes upon them in a moment, as they stand in serried ranks before the holy city. "Appalling, horrible picture! *standing on their feet*, yet their flesh mouldering away, as in a graveyard, their sightless balls decaying in their holes, the tongue putrefying in their mouth, a disgust to themselves and to others." Pusey.

holes] *sockets*, R.V.

13. *tumult*] Comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 20, where the same word is rendered "discomfiture," and where, as also in Jud. vii. 22; 2 Chron. xx. 23, the foes are described, as here, as fighting against one another in their panic.

14. *at Jerusalem*] This, or *in Jerusalem*, and not *against Jerusalem* (R.V. and margin, A.V.), which would be a wholly meaningless and irrelevant statement here (comp. xii. 2, note), is the rendering that must be adopted. There is no question here of the strength or allies of the opposing force, but only of the threefold cause of their destruction, viz. (1) the plague sent by God, ver. 12; (2) mutual slaughter, ver. 13; (3) the onslaught of Judah, rallying to defend the capital, ver. 14. "A still further element of 'confusion' would be added to the adversaries. When Jonathan gained his wonderful victory over the Philistines' garrison at Michmash, there was a confusion caused by God in the ranks of the Philistines (1 Sam. xiv. 20), which resulted, as here, in a terrible conflict taking place in their own ranks. Those Hebrews who on that occasion were with the Philistines, as well as Israelites who had fled into the holes or fastnesses of the mountains, plucked up courage when they saw the confusion of their adversaries, and stood up boldly against them. Thus in the picture here given, when the ranks of the enemies are thinned by pestilence and mutual slaughter, the prophet represents the whole of the people of Judah, not merely those who had escaped out of the city, but also those who were outside its walls, as once more fighting at Jerusalem, or in its very streets, against the terror-driven, plague-stricken, God-confounded foe." (Rev. C. H. H. Wright.)

the heathen] *the nations*, R.V., as in ver. 16, where the same Heb. word is translated "nation" in A.V.

Gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.
And so shall be the plague of the horse, 15
Of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass,
And of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.
And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of 16
all the nations
Which came against Jerusalem
Shall even go up from year to year
To worship the King, the LORD of hosts,
And to keep the feast of tabernacles.
And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up 17
Of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem
To worship the King, the LORD of hosts,

15. *tents*] *camps*, R. V.
as this plague] viz. that described in ver. 13. Comp. for this including the cattle in the curse, Deut. xiii. 15; Josh. vii. 24.

16—19. THE HOMAGE OF THE RESIDUE OF THE NATIONS.

The deliverance of Israel and judgments on her enemies shall have a converting influence on the residue of the Gentiles, who shall become worshippers of Jehovah, and keep the Feast of Tabernacles every year at Jerusalem, ver. 16. From any nation that refuses so to worship rain shall be withheld as a punishment, ver. 17. Egypt, the ancient foe of Israel, shall be liable to the same punishment, ver. 18, which shall fall upon all nations that neglect the feast, ver. 19.

16. *the feast of tabernacles*] The Jews had been required to appear three times in the year before God at His sanctuary. Of the Gentile nations, distant as they are and scattered over the face of the earth, only one such appearance is required. Various reasons have been suggested why, out of the three great festivals, the feast of tabernacles is selected: because it fell in autumn when travelling is most convenient; because, as a thanksgiving festival for the fruits of the earth, it was one in which all nations might more readily take part; or (which is more probable), because it was the last and greatest festival of the Jewish year, gathering up into itself, as it were, the year's worship, and at the same time typifying the ingathering of all nations into the Church of God. Comp. Rev. vii. 9.

"From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heav'n stoops down to see."

17. *will not come up*] *goeth not up*. R. V.

Even upon them shall be no rain.
18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that
have no *rain;*
There shall be the plague, where*with* the LORD will smite
the heathen
That come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.
19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt,
And the punishment of all nations
That come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.
20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses,
HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD;
And the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls
before the altar.

no rain] Comp. 1 Kings xvii.; Lu. iv. 25; Amos iv. 7, 8. "Pluviæ defectus omnem fere quæ inde oriri in illis terris solet comprehendit calamitatem, annonæ caritatem, seditiones, pestem." Rosenm.

18. *that have no rain*] Rather, **then not on them**, &c. The words are an exact and obviously intended repetition of the first words of the clause at the end of ver. 17, *then not on them shall there be rain*. The writer, however, seems to have broken off his sentence suddenly, when he had written, *then not on them*, perhaps from the remembrance that Egypt was not directly dependent upon rain like other countries (Deut. xi. 10, 11), and instead of finishing it with the words *shall there be rain*, to have changed its form, and written "(upon them) *there shall be* (in its equivalent form, and ultimately owing to the same cause—for the rising of the Nile which fertilizes Egypt is due to the rainfall) *the plague, &c.* The LXX. escape the difficulty by omitting the negative, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτους ἔσται ἡ πτῶσις: "even upon them shall be the plague."

19. *punishment*] Lit. **sin**, as in margin of A. V. and R. V., but sin here as manifested in its consequences. Comp. Lam. iii. 39, where it is literally, *a man for his sins.*

20, 21. THE PERFECT AND CROWNING HOLINESS OF JERUSALEM AND JUDAH.

The ornaments of worldly pomp and warlike power shall be as truly consecrated as the very mitre of the High Priest, and every vessel used in the meanest service of the Temple as holy as the vessels of the altar itself, ver. 20. Nay every common vessel throughout the city and the whole land shall be so holy as to be meet for the service of the sanctuary, and every profane person shall be for ever banished from the house of the Lord, ver. 21.

20. *Holiness unto the Lord*] *Holy unto the Lord*, R. V., and so in ver. 21; Exod. xxviii. 36.

pots in the Lord's house] 1 Sam. ii. 14; 2 Chron. xxxv. 13.

bowls before the altar] chap. ix. 15, note.

Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness 21
unto the LORD of hosts:
And all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them,
and seethe therein:
And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in
the house of the LORD of hosts.

21. *take of them*] All distinction between sacred and secular shall be at an end, because all shall now be alike holy.

the Canaanite] *a Canaanite*, R. V. Some would render, *the merchant*, a meaning which the word bears in Job xli. 6 [Heb., xl. 30]; Prov. xxxi. 24, and understand the prediction to be, that as any and every vessel that came to hand would serve his purpose, the sacrificer would no longer need to buy a special vessel, and therefore the traffickers in such wares (comp. John ii. 14; Matt. xxi. 12) would cease to frequent the Temple courts. The whole scope of the passage, however, is in favour of the view that "the Canaanite" here means any unclean person, whether heathen who had not accepted the religion and consecrated himself to the service of Jehovah (Nehem. xiii. 4—9; Acts xxi. 28, 29), or Jew who in heart and life was no better than a heathen (comp. "O thou seed of Chanaan and not of Juda," Story of Susanna, ver. 56). The true scope of the prophecy is that city of which it is written, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev. xxi. 27.

ΊΔΟΥ ΚΑΙΝΑ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΠΟΙΩ.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

On the Title, "The Lord of hosts."

THIS title of Almighty God occurs in different forms in the Old Testament. In addition to the form, "Jehovah [of] hosts," so common in these Books of Haggai and Zechariah, we have, "Jehovah God [of] hosts" (Ps. lix. 6, lxxx. 5), "God [of] hosts" (Ps. lxxx. 15), "Lord Jehovah [of] the hosts" (Amos ix. 5], and "Jehovah God of hosts" (Jer. v. 14, xv. 16). Of these forms the last is the only one which is grammatically complete, and from it we are led to conclude that in each of the other cases we have an abbreviated form, which written in full would be "Jehovah, God of hosts," "Jehovah God, the God of hosts," "God, the God of hosts," "Lord Jehovah, the God of hosts."

As regards usage, it is to be observed that this title does not occur in any of its forms in the Pentateuch, nor in the Books of Joshua, Judges, or Ruth, nor in the writings of Solomon or the Book of Job. In the historical Books in which it is found it is most frequent in Samuel, more rare in Kings, and rarer still in Chronicles. In the Psalms it is common and in most of the Prophets, with the exception of Ezekiel and Daniel, by whom it is never used.

The meaning and origin of the title seem clearly to be indicated by the history of its use. Its introduction is contemporaneous with the rise of the Jewish monarchy. The Books of Samuel are the record of that rise, and in 1 Samuel i. 3 the title occurs for the first time. But with the Jewish monarchy the Jewish army took a new departure. No doubt from the time of the Exodus a certain military organisation existed amongst the Israelites. Not only the battle with Amalek (Exod. xvii.) and the subsequent engagements with the enemies whom they encountered on their journey, but the prescribed order of march through the wilderness, in which each tribe formed a military division preceded by its banner (Numb. ii.), and the recognized subdivisions into thousands and hundreds with their corresponding officers (Numb. xxxi. 14,

48, 54), bear witness to the fact. But at that time there was no standing army. The whole male population, "from twenty years old and upward," was regarded as "able to go forth to war" (Numb. i. 20, 22). The campaigns of Joshua, abounding as they do in feats of bold daring and resistless courage, combined with successful stratagem, shew no acquaintance on the part of the Israelites with the science of warfare, and afford no proof of their material advance in military training and equipment. With the monarchy there came a change. One object that they had in desiring a king was that he might "go out before them, and fight their battles" (1 Sam. viii. 20). Saul, when he came to the throne, found the condition of the people in this respect very much at the low ebb to which the miserable times of the Judges had reduced them (Judges v. 8; 1 Sam. xiii. 22). One of the early acts of his reign was the formation of "the nucleus of a standing army" (1 Sam. xiii. 2). This was developed and organised by David, who was pre-eminently a warlike king (See *Dict. of Bible*, Art. Army).

It was only necessary that this newly developed military idea should be engrafted, as it could not fail to be, upon the theocratic idea which was the ruling principle of the Jewish nation, to suggest and render popular the phrase, *The Lord of hosts*, as an appellation of the God of Israel. Such an association of ideas was already familiar to the Jewish mind, and had already found expression in Jewish literature. The first great victory, on the birthday of the nation, was achieved for them by God alone without their co-operation. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace," was the order of that day (Ex. xiv. 14). But the national song of triumph not only ascribed the victory to Jehovah alone, but depicted Him as a warrior, going forth single-handed as the champion of His people to encounter and overthrow their enemies. "Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is His name" (Ex. xv. 3). On the eve of the war which resulted in the conquest of Canaan, there appeared to Joshua "a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand," the place of whose feet was holy ground, from whom, as from his superior officer, he received full and explicit directions for the taking of Jericho, and who in almost verbal anticipation of the title we are considering, was at once "Jehovah," and "Captain of the host of Jehovah" (Josh. v. 13—vi. 5).

Such appears to be the most simple and natural account to be given of the origin and general adoption among the Jews of this title of God. Its frequent occurrence in the writings of the post-captivity prophets may perhaps be accounted for, by the sad familiarity with armed hosts and the array of battle which the nation had acquired in the siege and capture of Jerusalem, and in their subsequent contact in Babylon with some of the great military powers of the world. The almost utter extinction of what were once the hosts of Jehovah among themselves, may well have led them to cling more tenaciously to a title, which set Him before them as "the God of the armies of Israel," with whom "is no restraint to save by many or by few." Possibly the absence of human hosts for their defence may have suggested the thought, that other hosts, whether the inhabitants (Ps. ciii. 20, 21), or the influences (Judg. v. 20) of heaven, were at the command of Him who claimed

that title for Himself. But this would be rather an adaptation and expansion of the primary idea, than the primary idea itself. And it must moreover be remembered, that when once a title, whether of God or man, has been adopted into the vocabulary of a people, it comes to be used as a proper name without distinct and conscious reference to the special meaning which it conveys.

Note B.

On Satan.

In this vision of Joshua the High Priest before the Angel of the Lord, the personality of Satan and his malicious attitude towards mankind are brought out with a clearness, which is of very rare occurrence in the Old Testament. He stands, in visible form as one of the *dramatis personæ*, at the right hand of Joshua. The object of his appearance on the scene is "to play the adversary against him." But this rare conception of Satan occurs in a Book which, so far as this portion of it is concerned, is confessedly of post-exile date. It may reasonably therefore be asked, Does the conception itself belong exclusively to the period in which we here meet with it? Is it so properly a late conception, as to furnish a safe criterion for determining the date of any Old Testament Book? Is it so certainly absent from undoubtedly early Books, as well as so plainly present in one at least of the unquestionably later Books, that we may regard its presence as a trustworthy indication of the lateness of the age in which an author lived?

In considering this question it must not be forgotten, that the whole Scripture doctrine of Satan, both as gathered from the partial and occasional intimations of the Old Testament, and as developed in the full revelation of the New Testament, is virtually included in the history of the Fall. It is true that the complete unmasking of the Tempter, the authoritative identification of the Serpent with the Devil, waited for Gospel times. Then it was that the Adversary of all the ages stood convicted, as "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. xii. 9), and that the ancient promise of victory was claimed for the conflict, which through all time the Church had waged against him: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). But in the mean time it is impossible to doubt that the Old Testament Church, possessing from the first that history and that promise, must have gained some insight into the existence and working of the great enemy of man. If with Bishop Horsley (Sermon XVI) we concede, that "by considering the denunciation of the serpent's doom, in connection only with that particular story of which it was a part, without any knowledge of later prophecies and revelations," an "uninstructed heathen" would conclude that, "this was no common serpent of the field, but some intelligent and responsible agent, in the serpent form," how can we deny the like and indeed far greater intelligence and perception

to the inspired writers of the Old Testament? The growth of doctrine in the Old Testament, no less than in the New, is a growth, not of accretion, but of development. It is the growth of the oak from the acorn, rather than of the building from the foundation. It is impossible to read the frequent and fervid eulogies of Old Testament saints, when the Scriptures of the Old Testament are their theme (as for example in the xixth and cxixth Psalms), without being convinced, that they found more in them than we sometimes suppose. The study as well as the observance of those Scriptures was commended to the Church by the last of the prophets (Mal. iv. 4), to be pursued by her during the long interval till the coming of Christ. And to such study is to be attributed in no small degree, not only the awakened popular expectation, but the advanced popular doctrinal knowledge, which was prevalent when He came (e.g. John iv. 25, xi. 24).

The recognition, however, of this truth still leaves the actual development of doctrine a question of history and of fact. The law of growth being established, the growth itself in accordance with that law has yet to be ascertained. It is quite conceivable, and is indeed what we should expect from our knowledge of the methods of Divine procedure, that the true conception of Satan should have been contained as in the germ in the history of the Fall, and yet should for the most part have lain dormant, till the requirements of the Church in later ages occasioned its expansion. We may decline to believe that the Jews *learned* their true doctrine of God and Satan, from the false doctrine of Persian dualism with which they came in contact in the land of their captivity. But we may nevertheless believe that Almighty God *took occasion* from that contact, to arm His Church against the seductive influence of the error which confronted them, by expanding and unfolding for them the truth which they already possessed. That such a picture as this vision of Zechariah furnishes, in which the true relations of Jehovah and Satan are vividly pourtrayed in bright contrast to the fabled contests between Ormuzd and Ahriman, should have appeared at such a juncture of Jewish history is entirely in accordance with the order of revelation. When, however, we proceed to enquire whether, as a matter of fact, the Church did remain in comparative ignorance on this subject until the times of the exile, we find but scanty *data* upon which to form our decision. The early historical Books are silent on the question. With the exception of its provisions against witchcraft and kindred arts (Ex. xxii. 18; Deut. xviii. 10—12), and the possible reference contained in the mention of Azazel (Lev. xvi.), the Law of Moses is equally reticent. The notice of the "evil spirit from the Lord" which troubled Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14), and the account of his dealings with the witch of Endor (ch. xxviii.) are scarcely an advance upon our earlier information. In the vision of Micaiah we have for the first time, since the history of the Fall, anything that can be regarded as a distinct intimation of the existence of a personal evil spirit. It is true that Hengstenberg (*Kingdom of God in the O. T.* II. 195, Clark's Trans.) and others understand by "the spirit" (1 Kings xxii. 21) "personified prophecy, prophecy taken as a whole, without regard to the distinction between true and false prophecy." But it is very difficult to conceive that the "lying spirit" and the spirit of truth

should have been looked upon as identical, and not only so but alike divine, in source and origin, and only antagonistic and contradictory by virtue of the opposite moral characters of the human agents by whom they spoke. The view, that by "the spirit" is meant the particular spirit or angel, whose service the occasion required, is rather an evasion than a solution of the difficulty. By interpreting the phrase of Satan, we bring the vision of Micaiah into harmony with the earlier and later revelations both of his personality and of the nature and method of his influence upon the human race. It becomes too in this way an intermediate link between Genesis and Zechariah in the chain of doctrine. The supreme and absolute dominion of Jehovah is fearlessly asserted. It is He who puts the lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets (ver. 23), just as in the New Testament it is He who sends men "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11). Nay it is He, whose spirit (ver. 24), in the sense of being permitted and employed by Him, the lying spirit is. And yet the freedom, within the limits prescribed by Him, and the responsibility to Him, of agents human and superhuman is steadfastly maintained.

The Book of Job furnishes almost the only other important contribution to our present enquiry. The 1st and 2nd chapters of that Book contain the fullest development of the doctrine of Satan to be found in the Old Testament. His relation both to God and to man, as there described, is in complete harmony with the teaching of the New Testament concerning him, of which it is a striking anticipation. That he is in absolute subjection to the Almighty, and can only act at all by His permission, and then only within the limits which He prescribes (i. 12, ii. 6), is in keeping, as has already been observed, with the uniform tenor of Holy Scripture. St Paul's "thorn, or stake, in the flesh" was "the messenger of Satan to buffet him;" and yet it was "given him" by the Lord, to whom, as the supreme Author and Disposer of it, he prayed for its removal (2 Cor. xii. 7, 8). That the design of Satan, in the case of Job as in that of St Paul, was malicious, though Almighty God in both cases overruled that evil design and caused it to subserve His own higher design of good to the sufferer, can hardly be doubted. The words of the Psalmist with reference to his enemies, "They only consult to cast him down from his excellency" (lxii. 4), express the obvious aim of Satan in his action against Job. The progressive revelation does not indeed arm him as yet with that awful, mysterious, spiritual power over the human mind and spirit, which the New Testament appears to ascribe to him (John xiii. 2; Acts v. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Ephes. vi. 16). But his power over men's bodies and the outward conditions of the world and nature is not only of the same kind as that ascribed to him in the New Testament (comp. Job i. 13—19, ii. 7, with Luke xiii. 16; Acts x. 38; 1 Thess. ii. 18; Rev. ii. 10), but is used as we have seen for the same ends. If we are not told explicitly that he himself suggested or had the power to suggest directly to Job, to do that with which he had charged him by anticipation (i. 11), yet he finds a human agent, who shall take occasion from the calamities which have come upon him to urge him to justify the charge (ii. 9). And in this too we have a striking parallel to the method which he appears to have adopted, when our Lord detected

and rebuked him lurking behind and employing the unwitting agency of His favoured Apostle (Matt. xvi. 23). Nor should we omit to notice another point of resemblance in the influence, if the expression may be allowed, which he is described as exercising upon the Almighty. "Thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause," are the words of God Himself respecting it. It would appear, indeed, that as the consequence of our Lord's triumph on the cross (Coloss. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14), and ascension into heaven, Satan has no longer access thither to prefer his accusations (Luke x. 18; Rev. xii. 7—13). But the vision of Satan in heaven, which our Lord Himself relates to His disciples before His crucifixion, agrees remarkably, as regards the point in question, with the vision in Job. "Simon, Simon," He exclaims, "Satan desired to have you," asked for you, the twelve, and obtained his request, as both the word used (ἐξητήσατο ὑμᾶς, Luke xxii. 31) and the sequel of the history shew, "that he might sift you as wheat." As in the case of Job, he obtained permission of Almighty God to test with malicious purpose the disciples. The counter-intercession of the great Mediator is a new feature in the New Testament description, but in other respects there is much in common between the two passages.

Two other Old Testament passages remain to be noticed. In one of these (1 Chron. xxi. 1, where the word is without the article) there is a remarkable advance in the doctrine of the subject. As in other instances the relation of Satan to Almighty God is one of subordination. What Satan is here said to do, is ascribed in the parallel passage in Samuel (2 Sam. xxiv. 1) to God Himself, by whose permission it was done. But here only in the Old Testament is Satan invested with power to suggest evil thoughts to the minds of men, and stir up evil passions and impel to sinful actions. "Satan," we are told, "stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." The Books of Chronicles, it must be remembered, in which this description occurs, are generally allowed to be of post-exile date, and are not improbably held to have a common authorship with the Book of Ezra.

In the other passage, above referred to, it may be questioned whether Satan is really intended, or whether the Psalmist only desires for his enemy, that when he is brought to trial he may not only have an "unrighteous judge" to pass sentence upon him, but a malicious "adversary" to plead against him (Ps. cix. 6, where see Dean Perowne's note). But whether preference be given with R. V. to "an adversary," or with A. V. to "Satan" as the rendering in this place, the date of the Psalm is uncertain, and the mere occurrence of the word contributes little to our investigation.

On a review then, of the evidence which these passages afford, the development of the doctrine of Satan does not seem to be sufficiently marked and decisive in post-exile as compared with earlier times, to warrant us in regarding it as a safe criterion by which to test the age of any Old Testament Book. Two indeed of the five passages which have been noticed, those in Zechariah and in Chronicles, undoubtedly belong to post-exile times. But they differ from the probable description in Kings, rather in the different aspect than in the fuller revelation of Satan which they give. All three grow out, so to speak, like

branches from a common root, of the original revelation contained in Genesis. The passage in Job, if it could certainly be assigned to the late age which some writers have claimed for it, might be held indeed decisively to turn the scale. But the arguments in favour of an earlier date for Job are too weighty, to be counterbalanced by so precarious a consideration as this.

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MALACHI

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROPHET AND HIS OFFICE.

OF the latest of the Old Testament Prophets we know nothing, beyond such insight into his character as the study of his Book affords us. Even his name is of doubtful import. The simplest and most natural view, which regards Malachi as his personal appellation, is indeed the most probable. But from the meaning of the word, "my angel", or "my messenger", as Jerome renders it, and from the prominence given in this Book to the idea of "the Messenger of Jehovah", some critics have concluded that Malachi is the official title, either of some unknown man or even of an angel[1], by whom these prophecies were delivered, or of Ezra, according to an ancient Jewish tradition[2], whose personal identity is thus, in a manner, lost in the office which he bears. Accepting Malachi, however, as properly the name of the prophet, we may not improbably regard it as an abbreviated form of Malachiah[3], "the messenger of Jehovah", just as Abi is, we know, the equivalent of Abiah[4], and Uri[5] has been thought to be an abbreviation of Uriah.

[1] "Malachy, which is called the angel of the Lord," 2 Esdras i. 40. ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ, Mal. i. 1 LXX.

[2] "Malachi autem Hebræi Ezram æstimant sacerdotem," Jerome. The Targum also identifies him with Ezra.

[3] The LXX. have Μαλαχίας as the title of his Book.

[4] 2 Kings xviii. 2 with 2 Chron. xxix. 1.

[5] Exod. xxxi. 2; Ezra x. 24.

But we can hardly doubt that the prophet's name, whether personal or official, conspicuous as it is by its very isolation and by the use made of it in the prophecy which it introduces, is intended to be significant. He who bears it is the last of "the goodly fellowship" of the Prophets of the Old Testament. He will tell us, by it, and by the absence of all information about himself besides it, what his office and theirs really is.

They had been known before by various significant titles—the Prophet[1], the Seer[2], the Gazer[3], (as it has been rendered)—during the long ages of preparation, in which Almighty God had employed them to instruct and correct His people, to unfold His purposes, and to reveal His will.

Not however as Seer or as Prophet, but by a name unknown, in this application of it, to former ages, as *Messenger* of Jehovah, will this latest of the prophets proclaim his mission. It was as though in those last times of the earlier dispensation, when it was already "becoming old and waxing aged, and nigh unto vanishing away"[4], some communication with heaven, more direct and immediate than even that which the prophet had supplied, was recognised, alike in the need and in the expectation of the Church. Some one sent forth from God to man, was what man looked and longed for now. Haggai had already claimed for himself to be "the Lord's messenger, speaking in the Lord's message unto the people[5]". Malachi takes up the word, and extends it to another great typical order, appointed to deal with men on God's behalf by the performance of significant rites and by the oral exposition of the Law. "The priest's lips", he avers, "should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts[6]." For himself, and by implication for his own order, he accepts it unreservedly. "Jehovah's messenger" is all that he cares to be

[1] נָבִיא 1 Sam. x. 5, 10—12; 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 7, 15. Comp. Gen. xx. 7; Ps. cv. 15.

[2] רֹאֶה 1 Sam. ix. 9; 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 10; Isaiah xxx. 10.

[3] חוֹזֶה 1 Chron. xxi. 9. Comp. Is. i. 1. The three names occur together 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

[4] Hebrews viii. 13 R.V. [5] Haggai i. 13; comp. Is. xliv. 26.

[6] Mal. ii. 7; comp. Eccles. v. 5, and see note there in this Series.

known as, or to be. In that name of happy omen, at once personal and official, he merges his individuality and sums up his history. Looking forward to the next prophet to himself, who after four centuries should at once complete the old order and introduce the new, he has on him also no other title to bestow. "Behold," the prediction runs, "I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me[1]." And He to Whom "bear all the prophets witness", Who was in the highest sense "Sent"[2] by God, whose whole revelation is the one word Gospel or Good-message[3], is foreseen and foretold as appropriating to Himself in the highest and truest sense the same title: "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in[4]." "The eventful consummation to which he looks is the arrival, not of the Warrior-King or the Invisible Majesty of Heaven, but of the Messenger who should enforce the treaty which had been made of old time between God and His people, which had of late been renewed by Nehemiah[5]."

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHET'S TIMES.

WE are able to fix within well-defined limits the time at which Malachi lived and prophesied. That his place in the Canon is chronologically correct cannot reasonably be doubted. He is almost universally admitted to have been the last of the Old Testament prophets. That he lived after the Captivity is certain. That he was later than Haggai and Zechariah appears from the manner in which he refers to the Temple worship, as now fully restored and as an acknowledged and accustomed thing. The stern rebukes of Haggai and the heavy chastisements of Almighty God had descended upon the people, because through their irreligion and supineness the Lord's House was not built[6]. The sharp reproofs of Malachi are called forth by the mercenary

[1] Mal. iii. 1. [2] John ix. 7, x. 36.
[3] εὐαγγέλιον. [4] Mal. iii. 1; comp. Is. xlii. 19.
[5] Stanley, *Jewish Church*, iii. 145. [6] Haggai i. 4, 9, ii. 15—19.

services and niggardly and unworthy offerings, by which the restored House and renewed worship of Jehovah are dishonoured[1].

Some have supposed that Malachi prophesied shortly before the Reformation of Ezra in 449 B.C.; as otherwise we might have expected him to refer directly or indirectly to that event. But a comparison of his prophecy with the Book of Nehemiah shows such a similarity in the circumstances by which they were surrounded, as warrants the conclusion that he is rather to be associated with that great Reformer. It has been truly said that "the last chapter of Canonical Jewish history is the key to the last chapter of its prophecy". If Nehemiah complains, "They have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites"[2]; Malachi in almost identical words exclaims, "Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts"[3]. If the Governor sets himself unflinchingly to reform the abuses connected with the forbidden marriage of foreign and heathen wives, the Prophet unsparingly denounces the wrong done to the Jewish wives who were put away in order to make room for these unlawful alliances, and declares that Almighty God will not accept the offering placed upon an altar, which is bathed with the tears and surrounded by the lamentations of these injured and insulted women[4]. If the one exerts his authority to cause "the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil" to be brought into the treasuries of the Temple, the other lifts up his voice to pronounce in God's name a curse upon those by whom they were withheld[5]. It is true that the name of Malachi does not occur, nor indeed does any reference to him, in the histories of Ezra and Nehemiah, though Haggai and Zechariah are distinctly mentioned in the record of the first Return. But the omission may be accounted for by supposing him to have been raised up a little later, to supplement the work of Nehemiah and to follow him, perhaps after a short interval, in reproving his countrymen

[1] Mal. i. 6—10, 12—14, iii. 8—12.
[2] Neh. xiii. 29. [3] Mal. ii. 8.
[4] Neh. xiii. 23—27 with Mal. ii. 10—16.
[5] Neh. xiii. 10—12 with Mal. iii. 8—12.

for the same sins into which they were already relapsing. "And indeed", as Ewald remarks, "it is no less important than consistent in itself that even the setting sun of the Old Testament days should still be reflected in a true prophet, and that the fair days of Ezra and Nehemiah should in him be glorified more nobly still."

CHAPTER III.

STYLE AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

1. *Style.* The prophecy before us is eminently practical in its character. It is almost throughout minatory in tone. The dark page of the prophet's roll, though illumined at its close by a gleam of the coming glory, is for the most part inscribed with denunciation and threatening and rebuke. And with these its contents the style of the Book accords. It is not wanting, however, in literary merit. It has elements both of grace and power. If he soars not to the sublime heights of Isaiah, nor unfolds the mystic visions of Ezekiel and Zechariah, the writer moves with firm and dignified tread along his humbler and more trodden path. He is concise and yet lucid; energetic and yet collected. There is peculiar force in his manner of making the object of his rebuke turn upon him with a sharp, short question, which he uses as a point of vantage to repeat and expand his charges[1]. Admitting the possibility of such questions having been actually addressed to the prophet in his personal intercourse with the people, during a previous oral delivery of his prophecies, we must still recognise the embodiment of them in the written record, which forms a clear and connected whole, as a characteristic of a pointed and vigorous style.

2. *Contents.* The argument flows on in a continuous course, without any very marked transitions, or interruptions. The Book consists, however, of two principal parts, having considerable resemblance to each other in their subject-matter, and finding their common meeting point in the great central truth enunciated in chapter iii. 6. To this, which is itself only an expansion of

[1] i. 2, 7, ii. 14, 17, iii. 7, 8, 13.

the truth, with the solemn announcement of which the prophet's message is inaugurated (ch. i. 2), the former section of the Book leads up, while the latter section is developed from it. The immutability of God, in both aspects of His unchanging love to Israel (comp. Jer. xxxi. 3), is at the root of all His controversy, and is the key to all His dealings with His people. They are not "consumed", though their sins deserve it, or His promise would fail: they must be purified and to that end chastened, or His holiness would cease. The argument of this Book may be gathered up in the word of God to Israel by an earlier prophet: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities"[1]. That is the summary of His whole revelation, the epitome of their entire history; and therefore it is the fitting subject of this last Book of the Old Testament.

Analysis of Contents.

CH. I. 1. TITLE.

This Book is the oracle or weighty message of Jehovah to His people Israel, conveyed to them by one whose significant name, "My Messenger", proclaims his office.

CH. I. 2—5. INTRODUCTORY APPEAL.

The ground of His whole controversy and of all His dealings with them, of all the rebuke and threatening, of all the comfort and promise, that Malachi is commissioned to convey, is the love which Jehovah has ever had for His people. The proof of His love, if they demand it, is to be found in the contrast between their own history and the history of another nation, allied to them by the closest ties of ancestry and blood. From twin brothers, alike sons of Isaac and of Abraham, Israel and Edom had sprung. Yet of Israel's history the brief but pregnant summary is, *I loved Jacob*; whereas on Edom's history, in the desolation and ruin of his country and the hopeless failure of his efforts to return and restore (as Israel had done after his captivity in Babylon), is written the everlasting sentence of irrevocable doom, *I hated Esau*. While the one land, as men read in its perpetual desolation the proof that the wrath of heaven rests upon it, shall be called, *the border of wickedness*, from the other, *the border of Israel*, safe beneath the shelter of the Almighty and witnessing as it were from afar the destruction of Edom, shall ascend the song of praise, *Jehovah be magnified*.

[1] Amos iii. 2.

PART I. CH. I. 6—III. 6. REBUKE AND THREATENED PUNISHMENT OF THE PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

CH. I. 6—14. *Rebuke of the Priests.* Turning with startling abruptness to the priests, who as the appointed guides and teachers of the people (ii. 7) were chiefly responsible for their misconduct, the prophet rebukes them in the name of Jehovah. They withhold from Him alike the filial honour which is due to Him as a Father, and the reverent fear which He can claim as a Master (*v.* 6). And if they ask the proof of so grave a charge, it is patent in the fact that they offer Him such offerings as a human governor would reject with scorn at their hands (*vv.* 7, 8). If they seek another proof let them intercede, if they dare, for the people with Him whom they have so insulted, and see whether He will deign to accept their prayer (*v.* 9). So great is His indignation against them, that He would fain see the doors of His Temple closed, and the fire on His altar quenched (*v.* 10), and the pure and world-wide service of the future established instead (*v.* 11). Unworthy indeed in contrast with that is the service now rendered by priests, who murmur at the smallness of their gains (*v.* 12), and grudge the labour they bestow, and bring and suffer to be brought in sacrifice animals diseased and blemished, or taken by force from their lawful owners (*v.* 13). The curse shall inevitably fall on the offerer who thus wilfully insults and defrauds the High Majesty of heaven (*v.* 14).

CH. II. 1—9. *Threatened punishment of the Priests.*

To the priests, again pointedly addressed, a solemn command to amend is given (*v.* 1). They will disobey it at their peril; for the threatened curse of the Law, transforming into itself the very blessings they enjoy, is hanging over them, and indeed has already begun to fall upon them (*v.* 2). If they persist in their evil courses, the withering blight shall descend upon the fruits of the earth; and their worthless sacrifices shall be flung back in their faces, like the filth and offal that strewed the Temple courts on some great Feast-day, and they themselves shall be swept forth together with it as an unclean thing (*v.* 3). Thus, by avenging their breach of it, will Jehovah make plain to them His resolve to maintain His ancient covenant with Levi (*v.* 4); that covenant, which while it bestowed life and peace demanded holy fear, and to which the priesthood in its palmy days held fast in reverence of spirit (*v.* 5), in truth of doctrine, in righteousness of judgment, in godliness of life, and as a consequence of these in its wholesome influence on the people (*v.* 6). Such should be the character and teaching of the priest, as the messenger of Jehovah (*v.* 7); and it is because these priests have so grievously come short of it (*v.* 8), that contempt and disgrace have already overtaken them (*v.* 9).

CH. II. 10—16. *Rebuke of the People for heathen marriages and divorce.*

But beside this desecration of Divine worship, a great social evil calls for stern rebuke. In face of the admitted truth, that as children of one Father the chosen people are all brethren, they wrong one another and profane the sanctity to which their race is pledged (*v.* 10),

by taking commonly in marriage the worshippers of heathen gods (*v.* 11). Condign punishment shall fall on all who thus transgress (*v.* 12). For on this evil another follows. The very altar of God is covered with the tears of the weeping women who flock around it, and the offering is thereby rendered unacceptable (*v.* 13). Why is it not accepted, do they ask? Because Jehovah, the Lord of the altar, has been witness of the unfaithfulness, consummated by divorce, of which they have been guilty towards the wives, to whom they were bound by the tender recollections of youthful love, by the intimate companionship of married life, and by the solemn covenant which united them to each other (*v.* 14). Their conduct is an infringement of the primæval law, declared by the creation of a single pair and their union into one flesh, that by pure monogamy is the sanctity of the race assured (*v.* 15). Jehovah, the God of the covenant people, regards with hatred the practice of divorce and the man who defiles, as it were, with cruelty and wrong the robe of cherishing protection which he ought to spread over the wife of his youth (*v.* 16).

CH. II. 17—III. 6. *Rebuke of the People for profane impiety.*

Evils such as these, ecclesiastical and social, having their root in hearts destitute of the fear of God (iii. 5), bear their legitimate fruit in open impiety, and in the profane challenge addressed to Him to make good His title to be "the God of judgement" (ii. 17). The challenge is promptly taken up. Preceded by a messenger to prepare His way, He whom they profess to seek and desire shall suddenly appear (iii. 1). But terrible shall be His coming (*v.* 2). Beginning with the fountain-head, He shall restore purity of worship by reforming the priesthood with searching severity (*vv.* 3, 4). Proceeding to the nation at large, He shall cleanse away from it all that offends in act and principle (*v.* 5). And this will He do, because unchangeable in name and in nature, His covenant will He not break, nor alter the thing that hath gone out of His lips. The sons of Jacob are chosen to be His people: therefore they are not consumed. They are chosen to be a holy people, for on no other condition could they possibly be *His* people: therefore they must be purified and refined (*v.* 6).

PART II. CH. III. 7—IV. 3. RENEWED REBUKES, THREATENINGS AND PROMISES.

This brief but pregnant statement (iii. 6), in which he has gathered up all that went before in his Book, the prophet now uses as a fresh starting-point, from which to travel over, though with no mere sameness of iteration, what is in effect the same course as before. This Second Part of the prophecy consists (as is indicated by the paragraphs in R.V.) of two sections (iii. 7—12; iii. 13—iv. 3), followed by a brief conclusion of the whole Book (iv. 4—6). In the first of these sections the people are again charged with withholding from Almighty God His due in tithes and offerings (iii. 7—12; comp. i. 6—14). In the second, the righteous judgment of God is declared to be already silently dis-

criminating between the open profanity of the wicked (iii. 13—15; comp. ii. 17) and the secret piety of the godly (iii. 16), and to be awaiting the destined day of its full manifestation (iii. 17—iv. 3; comp. iii. 1—6). The Book closes with a call to preparation for that predicted day by obedient remembrance of the Law (iv. 4), and expectation of the coming messenger (iv. 5, 6; comp. iii. 1, 1st clause).

CH. III. 7—12. *Rebuke in the matter of tithes and offerings.*

From the long-continued course of rebellion, in which, but that "Jehovah changes not" they would long since have been "consumed", they are called upon to return to the path of obedience (*v.* 7). The charge against them, to which they insolently and repeatedly demur, is brought home to them in the definite shape of "robbing God", and that in "tithes and offerings" (*v.* 8). The "curse" is their due as a nation (*v.* 9); but the way of blessing is open to them still (*v.* 10). The curse may yet be rolled away (*v.* 11), and blessing eminent and conspicuous succeed in its place (*v.* 12).

CH. III. 13—IV. 3. *The righteous judgment of God.*

Repeating the charge of open impiety which he had already made (ii. 17), and meeting their virtual denial of it (*v.* 13) by a recital of the impious language which they used (*v.* 14) and the profane conclusion at which they arrived (*v.* 15), the prophet sets over against these the secret converse among themselves of the godly remnant, and declares that even now the righteous Judge discerns between the two, and that already "names are written in heaven," of those whom He will claim for His own in the day of His discriminating action (*vv.* 16, 17). In that day all men shall "return" from their wanderings in doubt and defiance, and acknowledge the justice of the discerning sentence (*v.* 18). For while the wicked shall be consumed as with the breath of a furnace (iv. 1), on the righteous the sun of righteousness shall arise with beneficent and healing power, restoring them to joyful liberty (*v.* 2) and making them triumphant over their foes (*v.* 3).

CH. IV. 4—6. CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK.

In view of a future at once so awful and so desirable, they are called upon, by dutiful obedience to the Law which God has given them (*v.* 4), and in expectation of the final precursor of "the great and terrible day," whom He promises them, to avert the threatened curse (*vv.* 5, 6).

MALACHI.

1 THE burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by
Malachi.
2 I have loved you, saith the LORD.
Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?
Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD:
Yet I loved Jacob,
3 And I hated Esau,
And laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the
dragons of the wilderness.

CH. I. 1. TITLE.

1. *burden*] either *burden*, from its weighty character as a Divine announcement, or *oracle* as that which is 'taken up' (Ex. xx. 17: Numb. xxiii. 18) by the speaker. See note on Zech. ix. 1 in this Series.

Malachi] See Introd. pp. 7—9.

CH. I. 2—5. INTRODUCTORY APPEAL.

These verses form an exordium to the whole Book. The ungrateful disposition of the people and the unchanging love of God are in view in all that follows.

2. *I have loved you*] I have loved you with an everlasting (Jerem. xxxi. 3) and unchangeable (Rom. xi. 29) love. This is the keynote of all that follows. On this rests Jehovah's claim to the filial honour and reverential fear which had been withheld from Him (i. 6); on this the patient forbearance of the present (iii. 6), and the bright promise of the future (iv. 2). This is the light that casts the dark shadow of the people's ingratitude across the prophet's page, and that shines through and beyond the darkness, unquenched and unquenchable.

Wherein] These short pointed questions are a characteristic of Malachi's style, and lend great force to it. See Introd. p. 11.

I loved Jacob] The proof of this is contained in the implied contrast which follows. Comp. Gen. xxv. 23; Rom. ix. 10—13.

3. *for the dragons*] Rather, jackals. The unusual form of the

Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, 4
But we will return and build the desolate places;
Thus saith the LORD of hosts,
They shall build, but I will throw down;
And they shall call them, The border of wickedness,
And, The people *against* whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.
And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, 5
The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.

A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: 6
If then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour?
And if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear?

word here (fem. instead of masc. as elsewhere) has led many to render, *dwellings* (LXX. δώματα ἐρήμου; and Syr.). But the derivation and meaning are not satisfactory. Rather, with R.V., **I made his mountains a desolation, and** gave **his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness.** Unless indeed we neglect the accents and adopt a third rendering, which seems still better to preserve the parallelism, *I made his mountains a desolation, and his heritage a wilderness for jackals.*

The desolation of Edom here referred to was in all probability caused by Nebuchadnezzar, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah (xlix. 17—22. Comp. xxvii. 3—6). See Obadiah, Introd. pp. 20, 22, in this Series.

4. *impoverished*] Rather (with R.V. text, and so in Jer. v. 17), **beaten down.** "So Ephraim said of old 'in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.' Is. ix. 9, 10." Pusey.

return and build] This rendering is retained in R.V., but as there is no evidence that Edom was carried away captive 'return and build' is, probably, according to a well-known Heb. idiom = 'rebuild.' (Comp. Ezek. xxvi. 8, 12—14.) This Israel 'loved' of God had done, but Esau 'hated' of Him should not do.

border] i.e. *land*, or *territory*, as in ver. 5 below. It is frequently rendered *coasts*, in A.V., e.g. 1 Sam. xi. 3, 7.

for ever] For the subsequent history of Edom, as fulfilling this prediction, see reference to Obadiah in note on *v.* 3 above.

5. *your eyes shall see*] Unharmed and in safety yourselves you shall witness the overthrow of Edom (comp. Ps. xci. 7, 8).

will be magnified from] Rather, **be magnified over.** It is an ascription of praise (comp. Ps. xlviii. 1) to God who extends, as it were, His tutelary care over Israel, while utter destruction overtakes Edom. The contrast with Edom is emphasized by the insertion of the personal pronoun, "*ye* (Jews) shall say."

Saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.

And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

7 *Ye* offer polluted bread upon mine altar;

And ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?

In that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.

8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil?

And if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil?

Offer it now unto thy governor;

Will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

CH. I. 6—III. 6. REBUKE AND THREATENED PUNISHMENT OF THE PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

CH. I. 6—14. REBUKE OF THE PRIESTS.

O priests] On them first the rebuke justly falls, because they were chiefly responsible for the ungrateful return made by the people to the love of Jehovah. But in them, as its representatives, the whole nation is addressed and reproved.

7. *Ye offer polluted bread*] i.e. *sacrifices*. The word is often used in this sense and rendered *food;* e.g. Lev. iii. 11, 16. Elsewhere the sacrifices are called, *the bread or food of God*. Lev. xxi. 6, 8; Ezek. xliv. 7.

Their duty, as expounders of the Law (ch. ii. 7), was to refuse to offer such sacrifices when they were brought to them, and to teach the people that they were expressly forbidden. Lev. xxii. 17—25; Deut. xv. 21. "Sacerdotes debuerant illa omnia rejicere, et potius claudere Templum Dei, quam ita promiscue admittere quæ Deus sibi offerri prohibuerat." Calvin.

polluted thee] Comp. "ye have profaned me," Ezek. xiii. 19, R.V. "It is a bold expression. God speaks of our acts with an unveiled plainness, which we should not dare to use." Pusey.

ye say] by your conduct, if not in words.

8. *if*] Rather, When. Their poverty since the return from Babylon might possibly be urged by them as an excuse for this.

is it *not evil?*] Rather, **it is no evil**!, ironically, as in R.V.

offer it] The R. V. renders, **present it**, with a view no doubt to indicate that it is not the same Hebrew word as is rendered *offer* in *v.* 7 and in the former part of this verse.

thy governor] It is a foreign title, *Pechah*, that is here used, and so a badge of the continued servitude of the nation; though it may have been borne at this time by Jews, as it was by Zerubbabel at the Return from the Captivity. See note on Haggai i. 1.

accept thy person] i.e. regard thee with favour, as in *v.* 9, and elsewhere. The phrase, however, often occurs in a bad sense of exercising partiality, e.g. Lev. xix. 15; Psalm lxxxii. 2.

And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: 9
This hath been by your means:
Will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.
Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought?* 10
Neither do ye kindle *fire on* mine altar for nought.
I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts,
Neither will I accept an offering at your hand.
For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same 11
My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;

9. *beseech God*] lit. *stroke or smooth the face of God*, i.e. propitiate or seek the favour of God. See Dan. ix. 13; Psalm xlv. 12, and note on Zech. vii. 2.

It is not a call to repentance, but a challenge to put it to the proof whether, their conduct being such as it is ("this hath been by your means"), God will regard them in the discharge of their office as intercessors for the people.

this hath been] such irreverence as has been described above. Or if we follow the more exact marginal rendering both of A.V. and R.V., "This hath been," i.e. such offerings have been received, "from your hand."

regard your persons] Rather, **accept any of your persons**, R.V. *Is there one of you whose person He will accept?*

10. *Who* is there *even &c.* Rather, with the majority of modern commentators and with R.V. **Oh, that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle [fire on] my altar in vain!**

Better no sacrifices at all than such sacrifices as these. Better a Temple closed than a Temple profaned. Comp. Is. i. 12, 13.

the doors] not of the Sanctuary or Temple proper (*ναός*), but either of the inner court in which the altar stood, or perhaps of the whole sacred inclosure (*ἱερόν*). Comp. 2 Chron. xxviii. 24, xxix. 3; Acts xxi. 30.

an offering] The Hebrew word (*minchah*) is that commonly used for vegetable, as distinguished from animal sacrifices (Psalm xl. 7; Jer. xvii. 26; Dan. ix. 27). Here however, as elsewhere (Gen. iv. 4, 5; 1 Sam. ii. 17; Zeph. iii. 10), it has the more general sense of offerings of any kind. The proper meaning of the word, with which this general sense most nearly accords, is *a gift*. See Gen. xxxii. 14, 19, 21, xliii. 11.

11. *For*] "I will no longer accept the local and polluted offering, *for* I will substitute for it a pure and universal offering." "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

my name shall be *great*] The A.V. supplies *shall be* here and twice again in this verse (*incense shall be offered; my name shall be great*), and

And in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering:
For my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

the R.V. *is*, though with *shall be* in the margin. The reference may well be to the present as foreshadowing the future; to the spiritual offering of prayer and praise *already* offered in their synagogues and προσευχαί by the Jews of the Dispersion, whereby proselytes were won, and the way prepared for the New Dispensation and the abolition of the Temple ritual. The view that Almighty God is here recognising the worship of the heathen world as in reality offered to Him is quite inadmissible. The whole tenor of the Old Testament emphatically contradicts it, and the teaching of the New Testament is accordant and explicit: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God" (1 Cor. x. 20, cited from Deut. xxxii. 17). The terms of the prophecy itself forbid such an interpretation: for Jehovah Himself expressly declares that incense and offering are offered to *His name*, and that *His name* is great.

The prophecy of this verse is at once repeated and expounded by our Lord Himself. John iv. 21—24.

incense shall be *offered unto my name, and a pure offering*] There has been difference of opinion as to the grammatical construction of this clause, but the arrangement and rendering of A.V. is retained in R.V. and has the support of many critical authorities.

By "incense" and "offering" we are to understand those "spiritual sacrifices" of prayer and praise (Heb. xiii. 15) and almsgiving (ib. ver. 16; Philip. iv. 18) and self-dedication (Rom. xii. 1), which all Christians as a "holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5) are privileged to offer, and which are "acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". The more enlightened among the Jews recognised such spiritual sacrifices under the typical offerings of the ceremonial law, and they were therefore in no danger of giving a material interpretation to a prophecy like this. Before the prophecy was fulfilled it had come to be a matter of popular Jewish belief and practice that incense was the symbol of prayer. (Luke i. 9, 10). The Psalmist saw the same spiritual significance in "incense" and "offering" (*minchah*, as here, Ps. cxli. 2). It has been supposed that by the *offering*, or *minchah*, of this verse, the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are intended. But if that be the case we have here a prophecy of the universal offering of literal *incense* also; for by no sound canon of interpretation can we give a material sense to one (*offering*) and a figurative sense to the other (*incense*) of two words which are thus placed by a writer in the same category. And then it follows that incense is as necessary a part of Christian worship, as "the bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received."

It has been too hastily assumed that the early Christian writers put this interpretation on the *minchah* here foretold. Justin Martyr, for example, affirms that Almighty God in this passage declares by anticipation His acceptance of those who offer the sacrifices prescribed by Christ, that is to say "those sacrifices which in the eucharist of the

But ye *have* profaned it, in that ye say, 12
The table of the LORD *is* polluted;
And the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible.
Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* 13
And ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts;
And ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick;
Thus ye brought an offering:
Should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.
But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, 14
And voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt *thing:*

bread and cup are offered by Christians in every part of the earth." But he presently makes it clear that it is not the bread and cup themselves that he means. "I too assert," he says, "that prayers and giving of thanks, offered by worthy worshippers, are the only sacrifices which are perfect and acceptable to God. And these alone moreover have Christians learned to offer even in the memorial of their dry and liquid sustenance, in which too the remembrance is made of the passion which for their sakes the Son of God endured." (*Dial. cum Tryph.* § 177.)

12. have *profaned*] Rather, **profane**, R.V. lit. **are (habitually) profaning**.

the table of the Lord &c.] The reference is to the maintenance of the priests by their share in the sacrifices. After allowing unworthy sacrifices to be offered (*v.* 8), they complained that their service at the altar was inadequately remunerated, and murmured at their allotted portion as "contemptible". The expression, "the fruit thereof," is very doubtful. The word occurs again (K'ri) Is. lvii. 19, but there the K'thibh is נוב. Probably it should be omitted here altogether. The mistake may have arisen from a scribe beginning to write וניב instead of ונבזה. Then he put dots over the first word וְנִיב to denote that it was to be cancelled, but this was overlooked. Jerome explains it of the fire on the altar, taking also אכלו as a verb, 'cum igne qui illud devorat,' which of course is wrong. The LXX render it *τὰ ἐπιτιθέμενα αὐτῷ*.

13. *what a weariness* is it!] i.e. the service of the Sanctuary.

torn] Rather, **taken by violence**. R.V.

ye brought an offering] Rather, **ye bring the offering**, R.V. The reference is perhaps to "the (stated, public) offerings," which the priests provided out of the Temple funds entrusted to them (Neh. x. 32, 33). Comp. "the offering of Judah and Jerusalem," iii. 4. By purchasing cheap and unworthy animals they would increase their own portion of the fund. But *vv.* 12, 14 make it clear that similar abuses were tolerated in the private sacrifices of individuals.

14. *a corrupt* thing] or, *a blemished thing*, R.V. The word is feminine, and the meaning may perhaps be, that for a perfect male, which

For I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts,
And my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.
2 And now, O ye priests, this commandment *is* for you.
2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart,
To give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts,
I will even send a curse upon you, and will curse your blessings:
Yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart.
3 Behold, I *will* corrupt your seed,
And spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts;

he has in his flock and therefore could offer, as the law required (Lev. xxii. 18, 19), he substituted a blemished female.

CH. II. 1—9. THREATENED PUNISHMENT OF THE PRIESTS.

1. *O ye priests*] The discourse turns again in direct appeal to the priests. The exact order of the words is emphatic: *And now, for you is this commandment, O priests.*

this commandment] Some commentators would make "commandment" here mean purpose, or decree, and refer it to the punishment threatened in *vv.* 2—4. There seems no reason, however, to depart here and in *v.* 4 from the usual meaning of the word. The passage (*vv.* 2—4) is a commandment to reform, with threatened consequences if they disobey it.

2. *a curse*] Rather, **the curse**, as R.V. See Deut. xxvii. 26; xxviii. 15.

your blessings] i.e. the good gifts which I have bestowed upon you. Comp. Ps. lxix. 22 [Heb. 23].

3. *corrupt*] Rather, **reprove**, margin A.V.; or **rebuke**, R.V. Comp. ch. iii. 11: "I will rebuke (the same word) the devourer." God will wither with His rebuke the seed so that it shall not germinate, or shall not come to maturity. Thus the priests would suffer both in tithes and in offerings (Joel i. 2—13).

The LXX. (reading זְרוֹעַ for זֶרַע) render, ἀφορίζω ὑμῖν τὸν ὦμον, "I set apart for you the shoulder," that being the part of the victim reserved for the priest. Lev. vii. 34. Ewald, "I will rebuke your (the priests') arm."

of your solemn feasts] If this rendering be retained, it will of course mean the dung of the sacrifices offered at such feasts. The R.V. has *feasts* in the margin, but *sacrifices* in the text.

The figure is very forcible. It is as though Jehovah sees nothing in the droves of diseased and blemished animals that are brought to His altar on some great Festival, but the mass of filth and offal that necessarily accompanies the sacrifice. It is all one vast abomination! Flinging back in holy indignation the polluted offerings into the faces

And *one* shall take you away with it.
And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment 4
unto you,
That my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of
hosts.
My covenant was with him of life and peace; 5
And I gave them to him *for* the fear wherewith he feared me,
And was afraid before my name.
The law of truth was in his mouth, 6
And iniquity was not found in his lips:
He walked with me in peace and equity,
And did turn many away from iniquity.

of the unworthy priests, He overwhelms them beneath the fœtid heap, and thus they are swept forth with it from the sacred precincts. Comp. Exod. xxix. 14, 1 Kings xiv. 10.

one *shall take you*] It is more in accordance with our English idiom to render, with R.V., **ye shall be taken**. Comp. Is. ix. 5: "His name shall be called"; lit. "he (one) shall call His name".

4. *might be*] i.e. might *continue* (*porro staret*. Maurer). Whether they heard, or whether they forbore, they should learn in the issue, that God had sent them "this commandment" to repent on penalty of so dire a punishment, in order that the ancient covenant of Levi, of which the holiness of the priests was an integral part, might stand fast. What that covenant was is immediately stated in *vv.* 5—7.

5. *My covenant* &c.] Comp. Num. xxv. 12, 13; Nehem. xiii. 29.

for *the fear wherewith he feared me*] Lit. *I gave them* (viz. life and peace: I fulfilled my part of the covenant) *to him* (as) *fear*, (i.e. on condition that he should fulfil his part of it), *that he might fear* (R.V.); *and* (he did fulfil it, for) *he feared Me, and was afraid before* (stood in awe of, R.V.) *My name.*

6. *The law of truth*] Teaching, as a function of the priesthood, entered into the original idea and constitution of the office (Deut. xxxiii. 10; Lev. x. 11), and was revived in connection with it after the return from Babylon (Ezra vii. 10, 25; Nehem. viii. 1—8). To be without "a teaching priest" was a national calamity (2 Chron. xv. 3).

And iniquity] Rather **And unrighteousness**, R.V. This clause refers perhaps to the judicial decisions of the priest (Deut. xvii. 8—13), as being without respect of persons and uninfluenced by bribes. (Deut. xvi. 18, 19.)

he walked with me &c.] Comp. Gen. v. 22, 24; vi. 9. The walk of the priest, in the *peace* of a right relation to God, and the *uprightness* (R.V.) of a holy life, accorded with his teaching and his judicial sentences, and as the result of both *he turned many away from iniquity.*

"What a history of zeal for the glory of God and the conversion of sinners in those, of whom the world knows nothing; of whose working, but for the three words (*many he-turned-away from-iniquity*) in

7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge,
And they should seek the law at his mouth:
For he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts.
8 But ye are departed out of the way;
Ye have caused many to stumble at the law;
Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.
9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base
before all the people,
According as ye have not kept my ways,
But have been partial in the law.
10 Have we not all one father?

the closing book of the Old Testament, we should have known nothing!" Pusey.

7. *For*] And in all this he only fulfilled his duty, *for* such in life and doctrine ought the priest, as the messenger of Jehovah to the people, to be.

messenger] See Introduction ch. I. p. 13.

8. *at the law*] This rendering is quite defensible (Lev. xxvi. 37; Nahum. iii. 3); and the idea of the Law itself being made the stumbling-block of the people, by the tortuous interpretations put upon it by the priests and by their inconsistent conduct, is forcible, and is in keeping with the representation of Christ Himself as a "stumbling-stone" (Is. viii. 14; Rom. ix. 32, 33). As however the figure of the Law as a road or path in which men should walk smoothly and safely is of very constant occurrence in the Old Testament, it is possible to render "**in the law**", with R.V. and A.V. margin.

corrupted the covenant of Levi] Compare Nehemiah's complaint, and the example he gives, Neh. xiii. 28, 29.

9. *been partial*] Lit. **had respect of persons**. R.V.

CH. II. 10—16. REBUKE OF THE PEOPLE FOR HEATHEN MARRIAGES AND DIVORCE.

The transition from the former section is less abrupt than at first sight it seems to be. The people at large are now addressed directly, and not merely incidentally as before (i. 14); but the priests are still clearly in view, both as probably themselves guilty of the sin denounced (comp. Ezra x. 18; Nehem. xiii. 28), and as conniving at it by withholding or wresting the sentence of the Law against it (ii. 8, 9). From the *Covenant* too with Levi (*v.* 8) the transition is natural to the wider *Covenant* with the fathers (*v.* 10). The prophet lays down (*v.* 10) the principle on which the whole rebuke rests; and then deals with their transgression of it, first by heathen marriages (*vv.* 11, 12), and secondly, as a consequence of this, by the divorce of their lawful wives (*vv.* 13—16).

The word *deal-treacherously* is a key-word to the section. See *vv.* 10, 11, 14, 15, 16.

Hath not one God created us?
Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother,
By profaning the covenant of our fathers?
Judah hath dealt treacherously, 11
And an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem;
For Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved,
And hath married the daughter of a strange god.
The LORD will cut off the man that doth this, the master 12
and the scholar,
Out of the tabernacles of Jacob,
And him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.
And this have ye done again, 13

10. *one father*] i. e. God, as the parallelism suggests. Comp. John viii. 41. The reference to Abraham, though of course admissible (Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 39), is less satisfactory.

his brother] Out of the common Fatherhood springs a common brotherhood which intensifies the wrong. So St Paul writes, with reference to a similar subject, 1 Thess. iv. 6. It may however only mean "one against another."

the covenant of our fathers] Exod. xxxiv. 10—16; Deut. vii. 1—4.

11. *the holiness of the Lord*] Comp. Lev. xi. 44; 1 Thess. iv. 7. This is better than *sanctuary of the Lord*, R.V. margin. Comp. τὰ ἅγια, LXX.

which he loved] In like manner Almighty God is said to love *righteousness* and *judgment*. Ps. xi. 7; xxxiii. 5; Is. lxi. 8.

the daughter of a strange god] "As those who acknowledge, worship and serve the true God are called His *sons and daughters* (Deut. xxxii. 19), so they that worshipped any strange god are, by like reason, here called the daughters of that god. Hence the Jews say, 'He that marrieth a heathen woman is as if he made himself son-in-law to an idol'." Pocock.

12. *the man*] Rather, **to the man**, as R.V., i.e. out of his family.

the master and the scholar] Rather, as A.V. margin and R.V., **him that waketh and him that answereth**. It is a proverbial expression, like "him that is shut up and him that is left at large" (1 Kings xxi. 21), meaning all without exception. It is taken from sentries or watchmen who as they go their rounds give their challenge and receive the watch-word in reply. In the same sense the Arabs say, 'no one crying out, and no one answering, i.e. no one alive'. See Gesen. *Thes.* p. 1004 a.

him that offereth] nor shall the religious service, whether of priest or layman, avert his doom.

13. *again*] Lit. **second**. The first evil of marrying heathen women was accompanied by a second, the cruel treatment and divorce ("putting-away," *v.* 16) of their lawful wives, which is now dealt with, *vv.* 13—16.

Covering the altar of the LORD *with* tears, *with* weeping,
and *with* crying out,
Insomuch that *he* regardeth not the offering any more,
Or receiveth *it with* good will at your hand.
14 Yet ye say, Wherefore?
Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the
wife of thy youth,
Against whom thou hast dealt treacherously:
Yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.
15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the
spirit.

covering the altar] The weeping crowd of insulted and divorced wives turn to God, as their only refuge, so that the courts of His Temple resound with their sad complaints, and His very altar, round which they gather, is bathed, as it were, with their tears.

crying out] Rather, **signing**, R. V., as the same word is rendered in Ps. lxxix. 11; or **groaning**, Ps. cii. 20.

14. *hath been witness*] Comp. Gen. xxxi. 50.

of thy covenant] To the tender recollection of "the kindness of youth and the love of espousals" (Jerem. ii. 2), and the binding force of years since spent together in intimate companionship, there is added the solemn obligation of the marriage contract, "the vow and covenant betwixt them made", of which God is here said to be the "witness", and which is elsewhere called, "the covenant of God", Prov. ii. 17.

15. *did not he make one?*] The interpretation of this very difficult verse follows in the main, though with some variety of detail, one or other of two lines.

(1) By "one" here Abraham is held to be intended, who is called "one" in Isaiah li. 2 (lit. "for one I called him"; "I called him alone", A.V.; "when he was but one I called him", R.V.), and in Ezekiel xxxiii. 24 ("Abraham was one"). The words are thus regarded as spoken by the Jews, who seek to shelter themselves from the prophet's censure under the example of Abraham. "Did not one (Abraham)", say they, "do it (that of which you complain in us, when he took to wife Hagar, the Egyptian)? And yet he had the residue of the spirit" (comp. Num. xxvii. 18: "Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit"). "And wherefore", the prophet replies, "(did) the one (do it)? He was seeking (not as you are the gratification of his lust, but) a seed of God" (the son whom God had promised him. Gen. xvi. 2). "Therefore", seeing that Abraham's example avails you nothing, "take heed." If this, however, were the argument, we might have expected the prophet to reply, that so far from divorcing (as they were doing) his proper wife, it was Hagar and not Sarah whom Abraham sent away, so soon as disagreement arose.

(2) The other line of interpretation is that adopted in A.V. and retained in R.V. According to it the prophet recalls them (as our Lord

And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.
For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth 16
putting away:
For *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts:
Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

does in His argument with the Jews on the same subject, Mark x. 2—9) to the original institution of marriage and relation of the sexes. "Did not He (God) make one (one man, and out of him one woman, and the twain 'one flesh')? And (yet) the residue of the spirit (of life, comp. Gen. vii. 22: 'the breath of the spirit of life') was His (so that He could, had it pleased Him, have created, for example, one man and many women). And why (did He make) the one? He sought (what only by the purity and integrity of the marriage bond can be secured) a godly seed."

16. *the God of Israel*] who has given them His law. His relation to the people aggravates their guilt.

hateth putting away] Lit. **For he (Jehovah) hateth putting away (divorce), saith Jehovah,** &c.

It is true that divorce was permitted by the Law of Moses, in certain cases (Deut. xxiv. 1—4); but that, as our Lord teaches, was only a concession to "the hardness of their hearts" (Matt. xix. 8), and "from the beginning it was not so". The rendering of A.V. margin, which is also that of the LXX. and Targum, "if he hate her, put her away", makes the prophet call upon those whom he is rebuking to avail themselves of the provision of the Law, as the least of two evils: q.d. "better divorce her if you hate her, as the Law allows you to do, than retain her as your wife only to subject her to insult and cruelty". But apart from other objections, this interpretation loses sight of the fact that the motive of divorce in the two cases was entirely different, and that such advice, in the case here under consideration, is tantamount to saying, "If you wish to marry a heathen woman, get rid of your lawful wife first by divorcing her."

for one *covereth...his garment*] Rather, **and him that covereth his garment with violence** (R.V.) (do I hate), *saith the Lord of hosts.* Two things, in relation to the subject in hand, Almighty God declares that He hates. He hates "putting away", for it is a violation of His primæval law, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." And He hates ill-treatment by the husband of his wife, which stains and pollutes, as it were, the garment of protection which he is bound to spread over her. By "his garment" many commentators understand "his wife". But no such Hebrew use of the word has been adduced, and the Arabic use which is alleged is not conclusive.

17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words.
Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him?*
When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD,
And he delighteth in them;
Or, Where *is* the God of judgment?

3 Behold, I *will* send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me:
And the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple,

CH. II. 17—III. 6. REBUKE OF THE PEOPLE FOR PROFANE IMPIETY.

17. With another abrupt transition the prophet passes to a new though cognate subject. The abuses in connection with Divine worship and the social evils which he has already rebuked culminate in avowed unbelief (*with your words*), as to the justice of Almighty God and His moral government of the world. Though the righteous Judge be strong and patient, yet is He "wearied", His longsuffering worn out, by blasphemous charges of favouring and delighting in the wicked, or by the profane challenge to shew Himself, if He be indeed "the God of judgement".

wearied] Comp. Isaiah xliii. 23, 24.

Where is, &c.] Comp. Isaiah v. 19; 2 Peter iii. 4.

III. 1. God Himself takes up (*vv.* 1—6) the challenge, "Where is the God?" &c.

my messenger] They had been provided, in the priests, with a standing order of "messengers" of Jehovah (ii. 7). From time to time His special "messengers", the prophets (Haggai i. 13), had been sent to them. The last of such prophets, bearing as his only name, "Jehovah's messenger", was now exercising his office among them. But a yet more special "messenger" is to inaugurate that coming of Jehovah which they profess to desire. See Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2; Luke vii. 27.

prepare the way] Comp. Isaiah xl. 3; and for the nature of the preparation, "by preaching of repentance", Matt. iii. 1—12.

the Lord] "He who had before spoken of Himself in the first person ("I will send"), now speaks of Himself in the third person." Maurer. For a similar change of person, which is not uncommon in Hebrew, see ii. 16 above. "We are sure He which spake those words was (Jehovah) *the Lord of hosts*; and we are as sure that Christ is that Lord before whose face John the Baptist prepared the way." Pearson on the Creed. Article, *Our Lord.*

ye seek...ye delight in] A reference, not without irony, to the demand of *v.* 17, "where is" &c.

his temple] He, then, who comes is the Lord of the Temple. Hag. ii. 9.

Even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in:
Behold, he *shall* come, saith the LORD of hosts.
But who *may* abide the day of his coming? 2
And who *shall* stand when he appeareth?
For he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope:
And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: 3

even the messenger of the covenant] The R.V., by printing "and" in the text instead of "even" (which however it retains in the margin), and also by the punctuation which it adopts, leaves room for the view that "the messenger of the covenant" is to be identified, not with "the Lord", but with "the messenger" spoken of at the beginning of the verse, who is to "prepare the way" before Him: "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts". The weight of argument, however, seems clearly to preponderate in favour of identifying the "Messenger of the Covenant" with "the Lord", who shall "suddenly come to His temple". For thus the idea of *the messenger*, which pervades this prophecy (see Introd. pp. 13, 14) culminates (as do the Old Testament ideas of the prophet, the priest and the king) in the Messiah, who is in the highest sense the Messenger of God to man. The Angel, or Messenger, whose presence in the Church was recognised from the beginning (Acts vii. 38; Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, xxxii. 34, xxxiii. 2, 14; Isaiah lxiii. 9), follows up these "preludings of the Incarnation" by being "made flesh and dwelling amongst us". The covenant, which was before the Law (Gal. iii. 17) and yet by virtue of its later introduction "a new covenant" (Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Heb. viii. 7—13), He comes, in fulfilment of promise and prophecy (Isaiah xlii. 6, lv. 3), as its Messenger and Mediator (Heb. xii. 24), to inaugurate and ratify with His blood (Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. xiii. 20); while He vindicates His claim to be "the God of judgement" whom they desired, by the work of discriminating justice which He performs (*vv.* 2—5).

2. *a refiner's fire*] Comp. Matt. iii. 12.

fullers' sope] "The process of fulling or cleansing cloth, so far as it may be gathered from the practice of other nations, consisted in treading or stamping on the garments with the feet or with bats in tubs of water, in which some alkaline substance answering the purpose of soap had been dissolved. The substances used for this purpose which are mentioned in Scripture are nitre, Prov. xxv. 20; Jer. ii. 22, and soap, Mal. iii. 2.... The juice also of some saponaceous plant, perhaps *Gypsaphila struthium*, or *Saponaria officinalis*, was sometimes mixed with the water for the like purpose, and may thus be regarded as representing the soap of Scripture." *Dict. of Bible*, Art. FULLER. But probably borax is meant.

3. *he shall sit*] The expression gives "pictorial effect" (Hengst.) to the description. Comp. "He shall stand and feed" &c., Micah v. 4, for a similar "pictorial effect".

The figure of the fuller is dropped and the *idea*, common to both figures, prosecuted under this alone.

And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.
4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD,
As *in* the days of old, and as *in* former years.
5 And I will come near to you to judgment;
And I will be a swift witness

the sons of Levi] "Judgment must begin at the house of God." 1 Pet. iv. 17. Those who had been first in offending (i. 6—ii. 9) shall first be dealt with. The judgment of the people at large as offenders also (ii. 10—17) shall follow (*v.* 5).

purge them] The word is used of "straining" wine, Isaiah xxv. 6; but more frequently, as here, of refining precious metals. Job xxviii. 1; 1 Chron. xxviii. 18, xxix. 4; Ps. xii. 7.

The accumulation of words, *refine*, *purify*, *purge*, gives force to the description.

that they may offer...an offering] More exactly, **and they shall offer ...offerings**, R.V.; the plural being doubtless adopted to denote, what the Hebrew expresses, the *continuous* act of offering.

in righteousness] Not only in outward conformity with the Law, as contrasted with "the lame and the sick" (i. 8, 13) but in pure affection of heart and holiness of life. Comp. Luke i. 6. On the similar expression "sacrifices of righteousness", Psalm iv. 5 [Heb. 6], Dean Perowne observes, "The phrase occurs first in Deut. xxxiii. 19, and denotes either (*a*) sacrifices that God will accept, because they are offered not merely according to the ritual of the Law, but with clean hands and pure hearts (Isaiah xxix. 13); or (*b*) fitting sacrifices, such as past sin requires, in order to put it away." In the first of these senses it is used here.

4. *former*] i.e., as margin and R.V., **ancient**. See ch. ii. 5, 6; Jerem. ii. 2, 3.

5. *to judgment*] This is the answer to the challenge of the people at large, "Where is the God of *judgment?*" The "messenger" shall be sent. The Lord of the temple shall suddenly follow him (*v.* 1). His first work shall be to purify the priesthood (*vv.* 2—4). That accomplished, He shall open His solemn assize for the people generally (*v.* 5).

a swift witness] What need of further witnesses, when the Judge Himself is Witness also! "How great the dread of judgment, when He is witness and judge! Witness too He is against all 'sorcerers' and 'adulterers', for these crimes are perpetrated in secret, and shall thus be brought forth to light, that they be hid no longer." Jerome, quoted by Rosenmuller. We have a similar example of the identity of Judge and Witness, Ps. l. 6, 7.

By "*swift*" is denoted not only the alacrity of the witness, but the

Against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers,
And against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages,
The widow, and the fatherless,
And that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me,
Saith the LORD of hosts.
For I *am* the LORD, I change not; 6
Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from 7
mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*.

suddenness with which the judgment falls: "not only that which happens without delay, but also that which bursts unexpectedly, after an interval of time, upon those who forgetful of warnings are living in security. In that sense the day of final judgment is predicted as *αἰφνίδιος* and sudden, Luke xxi. 34." Rosenm. Comp. "suddenly", *v.* 1 above.

from his right] These words are added both in A.V. and R.V. The fuller, though somewhat different expression, "turn aside ('pervert' A.V., 'wrest' R.V.) the judgment of the stranger", occurs Deut. xxiv. 17, xxvii. 19. All the sins enumerated in this verse are condemned in terms in the Law.

fear not me] To this as to their root all the sins already mentioned are traced up, while at the same time many who were free from gross outward sins are by this condemned.

6. *For I* am *the Lord, I change not*] Rather: **For I, the Lord, change not: therefore** (lit. **and**) **ye, sons of Jacob, are not consumed.** The unchangeableness of Him, whose name, Jehovah, "**I am,**" is the exponent of His nature, is appealed to as the ground ("for") of His dealings with Israel. He changes not in His promises and purposes of grace (Rom. xi. 29); therefore, in spite of their rebellions and provocations, the sons of Jacob are still preserved. It is the same argument that is expanded in Psalm lxxxix. 28—37.

CH. III. 7—IV. 3. RENEWED REBUKES, THREATENINGS AND PROMISES.

CH. III. 7—12. REBUKE IN THE MATTER OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS.

7. *Even from the days of your fathers*] Omit **even**, with R.V. The connection with *v.* 6 is well given by Pusey: "Back to those days and from them, ye are gone away from My ordinances. 'I am not changed from good; ye are not changed from evil. I am unchangeable in holiness; ye are unchangeable in perversity.'"

gone away] Rather, **turned aside**, R.V., as the same word is translated elsewhere, e.g. Deut. xvii. 20, xxviii. 14; Josh. xxiii. 6; and with

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.
But ye said, Wherein shall we return?
8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye *have* robbed me.
But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?
In tithes and offerings.
9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye *have* robbed me,
Even this whole nation.
10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be meat in mine house,
And prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts,

the metaphor completed, *turned aside from the way*, Exod. xxxii. 8; Deut. ix. 12.

Return unto me] Comp. Zech. i. 3, where the word (*turn*, A.V.) is the same.

8. *ye* have *robbed*] Rather, **rob**; lit. **are robbing**: it is still going on.

tithes] By the Law of Moses (1) "the tenth of all produce, as well as of flocks and cattle, belongs to Jehovah and must be offered to Him" (Lev. xxvii. 30. 32); and (2) this tenth is "assigned to the Levites as the reward of their services" (Num. xviii. 21, 24). Nehemiah in his day had to deal once and again with the evil here rebuked. Notwithstanding the "sure covenant" into which they had entered (Neh. ix. 38 with x. 32—39), he had occasion, on his return to Jerusalem after an absence of a few years, to reform them again in this very particular (xiii. 10—14).

9. *a curse*] Rather, **the curse**. The threatened curse has already fallen upon you. See ch. ii. 2 with iii. 11.

have *robbed*] Rather **rob**, as in *v.* 8.

The pronouns in the Hebrew are emphatic: **Me ye** *are robbing*. And the evil is not confined to the priests (ch. i. 6—8, 12—14), but extends to "the whole nation".

10. *all the tithes*] More exactly, **the whole tithe**, R.V. Cf. Deut. xxvi. 12.

the storehouse] This may have been the "great chamber", or "lean-to", surrounding the second Temple on three sides, and consisting of three stories, each containing several rooms, which had been perverted from its original purpose as a receptacle of the tithes and offerings, and assigned by the High-priest to Tobiah, but which Nehemiah had restored to its proper use again (Neh. x. 38, xiii. 5—9, 12, 13). It is not improbable that the "chambers", which abutted to the height of three stories on the walls of Solomon's Temple, were intended in like manner for storehouses (1 Kings vi. 5, 6). In the great Reformation under Hezekiah such chambers were "prepared", either built or restored, in some part of the Temple area, to receive the enormous influx of tithes and offerings (2 Chron. xxxi. 11, 12).

meat] The Hebrew word properly means "prey", or "booty". It has, however, the same meaning of "food" as here in Prov. xxxi. 15 (comp. xxx. 8 for the verb in the same sense), and in Ps. cxi. 5.

If I will not open you the windows of heaven,
And pour you out a blessing, that *there shall* not *be room* enough *to receive it.*
And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, 11
And he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground;
Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.
And all nations shall call you blessed: 12
For ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.
Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. 13
Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

the windows of heaven] Comp. Gen. vii. 11, viii. 2; 2 Kings vii. 2, 19.

that there shall *not* be room *enough* to receive it] Heb. **till not enough.** The ellipsis has been supplied in various ways: "till there be not (barely) enough, but much more than enough, i.e. abundance"; or "till there be no longer sufficiency with Me, or, as that can never be, in boundless measure". The rendering, however, of A.V. and R.V., is the simplest and most satisfactory.

The history of the Jews in the time of Hezekiah had already afforded an example of the reward of faithful obedience, in the matter of tithes and offerings, in overflowing abundance bestowed upon them by God. 2 Chron. xxxi. 10.

11. *the devourer*] lit. **eater**, i.e. any insect, especially the locust, that would devour the fruits of the earth. The same verb is used of the ravages of four insects, "probably different kinds of locusts, or locusts in different stages of growth" (R.V. marginal note), Joel i. 4.

The threatened curse was the "rebuke" (ch. ii. 3, note) of the seed: the promised blessing is the "rebuke" of the devourer.

cast her fruit before the time] lit. **miscarry**. Comp. "a miscarrying womb", Hos. ix. 14; "miscarrying ground", 2 Kings ii. 19, 21. So Pliny speaks of "arborum abortus". (Pusey after Gesen.) In Rev. vi. 13 we read: "the stars of the heaven fall unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken of a great wind."

12. *call you blessed*] or *happy*, R.V., as in *v.* 15. *μακαριοῦσιν ὑμᾶς*, LXX. Comp. *μακαριοῦσι με*, Luke i. 48, and James v. 11.

CH. III. 13—IV. 3. THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD.

13. *have been stout*] See ii. 17. Comp. Job xxi. 14, 15; Jude 15.

so much] Omit *so much* here, and *often*, *v.* 16. The force of the Hebrew conjugation is "reciprocal" (Gesen.), to speak "together", or "one with another". Comp. Ps. cxix. 23; Ezek. xxxiii. 30.

It was not the perplexed questioning of a devout heart (Ps. lxxiii.), nor the secret cogitation of an ungodly heart (Ps. xiv. 1), but the open blasphemy of those who "sat in the seat of the scorner" (Ps. i. 1).

14 Ye have said, It *is* vain to serve God:
And what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance,
And that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?
15 And now we call the proud happy;
Yea, they that work wickedness are set up;
Yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered.
16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another:

14. *kept his ordinance*] lit. **observed his observance.** *Kept his charge*, R.V.

It is the same tendency to regard mere outward observance as true religion, which earlier prophets had denounced (1 Sam. xv. 22; Isaiah lviii. 1—4), and which culminated in the Pharisaism of New Testament times (John xviii. 28).

walked mournfully] With outward signs of mourning: "in mourning apparel", R.V. as a sign of humiliation and contrition. Comp. Joel ii. 13; Is. lviii. 5; Matt. vi. 16—18.

There may possibly be a reference to the frequent national Fasts which were observed after the return from Babylon. See Zech. vii. 3, 5, viii. 19.

15. *we call the proud happy*] The word **we** is emphatic, and suggests a reference on the part of the speakers to *v.* 12 above: "*Thou* sayest that all nations shall call them that obey Thee happy; *we*, on the contrary, call the proud rebels against Thee happy."

set up] Rather, **built up**, as A.V. margin, and R.V. Comp. Jer. xii. 16; Job xxii. 23.

they that *tempt*, &c.] Rather, **yea, they tempt God, and are delivered**, as R.V. The persons are the same as in the preceding clause, "they that work wickedness".

In this as in the earlier section of the prophecy the rebuke and denunciation of evil leads up to the prediction of impending judgment. In the earlier section the discriminating nature of the coming judgment is not lost sight of. It will purify as well as destroy (iii. 3, 4 with 5). But in this latter section this feature of discrimination becomes more prominent. And the thought is added, for the comfort of the godly, that the discriminating judgment exists already (iii. 16, 17), though its manifestation must be waited for till "the day" comes (*v.* 18). The day in which all men shall "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not", will be the day, not of the inception, but of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans ii. 5).

16. *Then*] When they heard "the hard speeches which ungodly sinners spake against Him" (Jude 15), then they spake one to another words of reverent trust and love and piety. "The more the ungodly spake against God, the more these *spake among themselves* for God'." Pusey.

Some modern commentators, however (e.g. Maurer and Hitzig),

And the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*,
And a book of remembrance was written before him
For them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.
And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, 17
In that day when I make *up my* jewels;

regard *vv.* 14, 15 as the substance of what the *godly* spake one to another; and this view, unsatisfactory as it is, appears to be that of the LXX.: ταῦτα κατελάλησαν οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον, ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ.

spake often] Omit **often**. See note on *v.* 13 above.

a book of remembrance] Canon Rawlinson (in *The Speaker's Commentary*, on Esther vi. 3) says, "It was a settled principle of the Persian government that 'Royal Benefactors' were to receive an adequate reward. The names of such persons were placed on a special roll (Herod. VIII. 85), and great care was taken that they should be properly recompensed (see Herod. III. 140, V. 11, VIII. 85; Thucyd. I. 138; Xen. *Hel.* III. I. § 6, &c.). It is a mistake, however, to suppose (Davidson) that they were always rewarded *at once*. Themistocles was inscribed on the list in B.C. 480, but did not obtain a reward till B.C. 465. Other 'benefactors' waited for months (Herod. V. 11) or perhaps years (*ib.* IX. 107) before they were recompensed." The figure of a Book of record or remembrance, as kept or directed to be kept by Almighty God, is of early as well as of very general occurrence in Holy Scripture. Moreover there was a 'Recorder' in the court of the Hebrew kings. See Exod. xvii. 14, xxxii. 32; Psalm lxix. 28; Dan. vii. 10; Luke x. 20; Revelation xx. 12.

thought upon] Gesenius compares "which shall not *regard* silver", Is. xiii. 17; "he *regardeth* no man", Is. xxxiii. 8; "we *esteemed* him not", Is. liii. 3; in all which places the same Hebrew word is used. In all these places in Isaiah (though not here in Malachi) the LXX. have λογίζομαι as the equivalent, which is the word employed by St Paul in a similar sense, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε, Philip. iv. 8.

17. *in that day when I make up my jewels*] This rendering is supported by the Hebrew accents, and is adopted substantially in R.V. margin, *wherein I do make a peculiar treasure*. The phrase, however, to make a treasure, is awkward and unusual, and it seems every way better to take the word (for it is really one word) a-peculiar-treasure as exegetical of the former part of the verse: **They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts**...(*as*) **a peculiar treasure**. This accords with the early use of the same word by Almighty God with reference to Israel (Exod. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6, xiv. 2, xxvi. 18). And it leaves us free to give the same meaning to the intermediate clause, *in the day that I do, or make*, here and in ch. iv. 3. That clause is rendered by many commentators, and in R.V. text, *in the day that I do make*. (Comp. Ps. cxviii. 24.) But the frequent use in the O.T. of the verb here employed, absolutely and without any subject expressed, to denote the doing or working of

And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that
serveth him.
18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous
and the wicked,
Between him that serveth God and *him* that serveth him
not.
4 For behold, the day cometh, that *shall* burn as an oven;
And all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be
stubble:
And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the
LORD of hosts,
That it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteous-
ness arise

the Almighty, the nature of that doing or working being undefined, or easily deducible from the context, support the rendering of R.V. margin, *in the day that I do this*. Perhaps, however, it would be better to leave the subject, as it is, unsupplied, and render, **in that day when I do, (or act)** i.e. when observation and purpose and promise pass into action. Comp. Psalm xxii. 31 [Heb. 32]; Isaiah xliv. 23, xlviii. 11; Jerem. xiv. 7; Dan. viii. 24. This view is confirmed by the emphatic personal pronoun, *when* **I** *act*, both here and in iv. 3. The LXX. render in this verse, εἰς ἡμέραν ἣν ἐγὼ ποιῶ; but in iv. 3, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ ἐγὼ ποιῶ.

18. *return, and discern*] When "judgment shall *return* unto righteousness" (Ps. xciv. 15), when, that is, the judgement of God shall not only be, as it ever is, but be seen to be righteous, then not only shall "all the upright in heart follow it" with glad approval, but those who have impiously called it in question (*vv.* 14, 15) shall witness and confess the justice of the discriminating sentence.

IV. **1.** *the day*] i.e. "the day" predicted in the preceding verse, with which this verse coheres closely. The commencing of a new chapter here in A.V. (and LXX., after Vulg., though not in our present Hebrew Bibles) is unfortunate. The R.V. rightly prints from iii. 13 to iv. 3 inclusive in a continuous paragraph.

that shall *burn as an oven*] Rather, **it burneth as a furnace**, R.V. Comp. ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει, ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ ἀποκαλύπτεται, *for the day shall declare it, because it* (*the day*) *is revealed in fire*, 1 Cor. iii. 13.

all the proud...all that do wickedly] The judgment passed on them by the scoffers (iii. 15) shall be signally reversed.

root nor branch] A sudden change of figure from the straw or "stubble" to the tree which succumbs to the raging fire, till neither root nor branch remains.

2. *the Sun of righteousness*] The capital letter with which "Sun" is printed in A.V. is of the nature of a comment. It suggests at once to the reader the personal and Messianic reference of the word. But it is

With healing in his wings;

better to print "sun" with R.V.; not as denying or obscuring the ultimate and designed reference to Christ, but as exhibiting it in a manner more agreeable to the genius of Old Testament prophecy and to the requirements of the context. The key-thought of this whole paragraph is *righteousness*. God's righteousness has been proudly and defiantly called in question by "the wicked": it has been humbly trusted in and waited for by "the righteous" (*v.* 18). The day of its manifestation is at hand. That discriminating day shall award to each their righteous recompense. To the wicked it shall come as a burning furnace to consume them: upon the righteous it shall dawn as a day of which the very sun that makes it is righteousness. Just as in the material world the shadows and distortions and illusions of night vanish before the light of the rising sun, which shows all things as they really are, so in the moral world the sun of righteousness shall put to flight the difficulties and perplexities, the inequalities and anomalies, which have been the trial of the faithful and the weapon of the scoffer. No place for them shall be found, when the sun of righteousness shall dawn from new heavens upon a new earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness".

But this explanation of the phrase only prepares the way for the personal and Messianic reference. To every Jew the thought of God Himself as a Sun was familiar (Psalm lxxxiv. 11 [Heb. 12]; Isaiah lx. 19). His religion taught him to look for deliverance and blessing, not from the diffusion of a quality or attribute, but from the manifestation of a Personal God. And it no less plainly taught him that that manifestation would be consummated in "the righteous Branch" who should "execute judgment and justice in the land" (Jerem. xxiii. 5). For us the Sun of righteousness is none other than "Jesus Christ, the righteous" (1 John ii. 1), "the Lord, the righteous Judge, who shall give at that day a crown of righteousness unto all them that love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8).

with healing in his wings] Comp. "the wings of the morning", Ps. cxxxix. 9. In both cases the rising of the sun is compared, not to the use of the wings in flight, but to *lifting them up*, or *spreading them out*. In the Psalm the suddenness and rapidity with which this is done, when the sun "flares up from behind the mountain-wall of Moab," is the point of comparison (Comp. "the morning spread upon the mountains," Joel ii. 2; and the swift travelling of the light across the landscape in our own country, when the sun emerges from a cloud on a windy day). Here the healing virtue of the outstretched wings is in view. "A pleasant", and a wholesome, "thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Eccles. xi. 7.

In Syria "the Sun god was the central object of worship.... It was here too that his special symbol was the solar disk with wings issuing from either side to denote his omnipresent energy. The winged solar disk may have been originally of Babylonian invention, but it passed at an early time to the other Semitic populations of the East. We find it above the figure of a king on a monolith from Birejik now in the British Museum, and it is specially characteristic of the monuments of the

And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.
3 And ye shall tread down the wicked;
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
In the day that I *shall* do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.
4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant,
Which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I *will* send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Hittites." Prof. Sayce, Annual Address (1889) to the Victoria Institute on the Cuneiform Inscriptions at Tel El-Amarna, p. 2.

grow up] Rather **gambol**, R.V. σκιρτήσετε, LXX. Comp. Jerem. l. 11, "ye are wanton", R.V.

calves of the stall] ὡς μοσχάρια ἐκ δεσμῶν ἀνειμένα, LXX.

3. *ashes*] to which the "stubble" has been reduced, *v.* 1.

that I shall *do* this] Rather, **when I do, or work**. See note on iii. 17.

CH. IV. 3—6. CONCLUDING EXHORTATION (*v.* 4) AND PROMISE (*vv.* 5, 6).

Remember ye the law of Moses] The revelation of God is always continuous. Each fresh step is evolved out of, and is in harmony with, those which went before. To "remember" the past is to prepare for the future. The exhortation here is a direction to the Church in prospect of the four centuries which would elapse, before any other prophet should arise and the promise (*vv.* 5, 6) be fulfilled.

To the more careful study of the law, in the wider sense of the O. T. Scriptures, to which this exhortation led, may be traced much of the advance in theological knowledge which we find among the Jews in the time of our Lord.

which I commanded unto him in Horeb] A statement like this, put by an inspired prophet into the mouth of God Himself, has an important bearing on the historical character and date of composition of the Pentateuch.

with *the statutes and judgments*] Rather (*consisting in*) **statutes and judgments**: "even statutes and judgments", R.V.: "(Nempe) statuta et judicia." Calv. The words are explanatory of the nature of the law. Comp. Deut. iv. 8; Lev. xxvi. 46.

5. *Elijah the prophet*] The reading of the LXX., "Elijah the Tishbite" (τὸν Θεσβίτην), has been thought to indicate their belief that the actual return of Elijah to earth is here foretold. Some have traced the same belief in the appropriation by the Son of Sirach to the literal Elijah of Malachi's description of the work of the coming prophet (*v.* 6)

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,
And the heart of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and smite the earth *with* a curse. 6

(Ecclus. xlviii. 10); though it may well be doubted whether the passage proves anything more than his acquaintance with our prophecy. The belief, however, was certainly current among the Jews in our Lord's time (Matt. xvii. 10; Mark ix. 11; John i. 21). Nor does it follow that the belief was unfounded, because He Himself distinctly claims the prophecy for John the Baptist, identifying him at the same time with the "messenger" foretold by Malachi (Matt. xi. 10, 14, xvii. 12, 13). The prophecy had a *first* fulfilment in the Baptist, who went before the face of the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elijah", to do the work here described (Luke i. 17). In one sense he was "Elias which was for to come"; but in another sense, and on his own confession (John i. 21), he was not. For the prophecy awaits a second and (as some believe) more literal fulfilment; and as the typical Elijah came before Christ's first Advent, and "they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed", so before His second Advent shall another Elijah come "and shall restore all things." (Matt. xvii. 10—13).

6. *he shall turn the heart of the fathers*] The "fathers" here are the patriarchs, whom the prophet regards as estranged from their degenerate "children", or descendants, and ceasing to acknowledge them on account of their unworthy character and conduct. (Comp. Isaiah lxiii. 16; Matthew iii. 9.) When "the heart of the children is turned to their fathers", so that they seek to imitate their example and walk in their ways, or, in other words, when "the disobedient" are turned "*to walk* in the wisdom of the just" (Luke i. 17, R.V.), then the heart of the fathers will turn to them again in paternal recognition and love.

Some think (and the rendering *with*, R.V. margin, instead of *to*, favours the view), that the prophet refers to a state of discord and dissension between contending sections of the Jewish people, the old conservative, the young revolutionary, such as would need the intervention of a powerful prophet to correct. But is there any proof that this was the state of society with which John Baptist had to deal? Was not rather the whole nation corrupt and in need of being restored to its pristine purity?

with *a curse*] The Masoretic direction is to read again at the end of this Book the last verse but one (iv. 5), in order to avoid concluding with the ominous word "curse" or "ban"; and the LXX., presumably with the same object, place *v.* 4 after *vv.* 5, 6. Yet the dark close of the Old Testament, "Lest I come and smite with the curse", rightly understood, is the truest preparation for the bright opening of the New, "Behold, I am come to bless!"

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